

# 2025

## Canterbury Plan for Tomorrow Update



*Adopted May 13, 2025*

# 1 Executive Summary

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**Overview:**

This is the fifth revision of the original Master Plan for Canterbury, which was first approved in 1971. As in the past, Canterbury's Master Plan is called the "Plan for Tomorrow." Since 1971, many things have changed in and around our Town. However, one thing has remained consistent throughout the years. As compared with growth and development in surrounding towns, Canterbury's long-term planning efforts have been extremely effective. The Town has changed, as it must, but it has remained the same in the many ways that are most valued by the Townspeople. This is due, in large measure, to the foresight and efforts of Canterbury's Planning Boards, Selectmen, and all of the community's thoughtful citizens who have participated in past planning efforts.

Planning, by its very nature, is a continuous activity. When done well, it can anticipate the expected needs of the Town and the region and can help to create and/or preserve the kind of environment the majority of citizens want in the years ahead.

The following is a summary of the topics covered in the Plan for Tomorrow. The Plan also includes an Implementation Chapter that highlights the priorities set forth.

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**Elements:**

- Vision
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Community Facilities
- Natural Resources

## ***Vision***

The Canterbury Plan for Tomorrow is created as a living document that is periodically updated. It articulates the vision, desires, and concerns of the community. It serves as a road map for the future. This Plan describes Canterbury today and the community's shared vision for the future. Most importantly, it defines what the Town will need to do over the next several years to fulfill that vision.

This Plan provides recommendations on ways to maintain or improve the features of the community and aims to serve as a blueprint for planning Canterbury's future. This Plan can help support economic development efforts, amendments to land use regulations, environmental and historic preservation efforts, expansion of community facilities and services, transportation enhancements, and much more over the next several years.

## ***Land Use***

The goals and policies for the use of Canterbury land established in this chapter are consistent with historical patterns and with the residents' desire to preserve Canterbury's rural and residential character. Future development should be evaluated by its impact on the character of the Town, as well as by its impact on both the cost of Town services and the general quality of life in Canterbury. The experience of other towns demonstrates that unplanned, uncontrolled growth leads to a change in the Town's character along with higher taxes. Once begun, neither trend can easily be reversed.

High priorities include the encouragement of the use of the Cluster Development Ordinance by simplifying the ordinance and the consideration of a range of density incentives. This was also noted in the Housing chapter and was initiated with changes approved at Town Meeting 2024. Other key priorities include the consideration of possible changes in the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to direct development away from cleared fields and prime agricultural land to those areas of

limited agricultural or conservation uses. In addition, continuing to identify, inventory, protect, and maintain features that make up the rural character of the Town, such as dirt roads, stone walls, open land, the trail system, and old farm buildings was identified as a high priority.

## ***Transportation***

Transportation encompasses vehicular traffic on Town roads and State highways, as well as trail development, public transit, volunteer driver programs, and transportation demand management. Canterbury's transportation system and its connection to the regional and state network provides access to goods and services required by residents and commerce.

This chapter will document the existing conditions and trends of the transportation network, identify how maintenance and improvements are funded, and describe basic principles for planning a transportation network that meets the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses in Canterbury.

High priorities include monitoring and participation in project planning activities related to the NH 106 widening and the recently completed US 4 (Hoit Road), Old Boyce Road and Whitney Road Intersection Improvement projects, and the promotion and support of the existing services offered by the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Inc. In addition, there is support for the exploration of options to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety such as construction of sidewalks and widening shoulders as appropriate and continuing to monitor safety issues in the vicinity of the Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road intersection.

## ***Housing***

The character of housing in a community reflects its stability and prosperity and it is a good indicator of the overall quality of life. For the most part, residents love Canterbury just the way it is. Its agricultural heritage is proudly displayed not just at Shaker Village, but throughout the countryside in town, with its many picturesque, historic farms. The community survey did suggest a growing unease with demographic trends and a concern about the availability and affordability of housing in town, especially for seniors and young families. The ideal vision for future housing in Canterbury, as relayed by residents, is described in this chapter. Various local and regional housing trends are explored that could significantly impact that vision and Canterbury's future. The town's current framework regulating housing construction is analyzed and from that analysis, a series of recommendations have been made.

High priorities include the previously noted support of cluster developments, support for mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Exits 17 and 18 to accommodate a mix of housing and small-scale retail/office uses, and the update to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to meet the goals, policies, and objectives described in this Plan update. Some of that implementation was addressed at Town Meeting 2024, including support for accessory dwelling units. Finally, there was support to periodically reevaluate the existing "building permit cap.

## ***Community Facilities***

Providing and maintaining the essential services of community and recreational facilities are jointly one of the primary functions of government. As the population and the demographics of the community grow and change over time, it is important for the community to adjust its delivery of services to meet the needs of the changing population.

The Community Facilities Chapter is organized into evaluations of Canterbury's Departments and Town services, with special

discussions included of the School District, public utilities and the recreational opportunities and conservation lands, and describes the status and needs of Canterbury's facilities as of the time of the publication of the Plan for Tomorrow update. The strength and efficiency of each service is paramount to the community's well-being. The 2020 Community Survey and 2022 Visioning Session results help obtain residents' perspectives on these critical components of the Town's infrastructure and programs. Some of the survey results included short term and long-term needs and goals. Suggestions for future improvements to the Town's community facilities can also be found in Canterbury's 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and through analysis of the departments' future capacities.

One tool the Town can use to help manage its community facilities is the preparation and update of an annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP), as part of the municipality's financial planning and budgeting process. This CIP is central to the chapter's Overall Key Findings which presents a list of recommended long-term actions relative to community facilities, recreational facilities, and utilities. The location of the Town's community and recreational facilities are provided on maps to accompany this chapter.

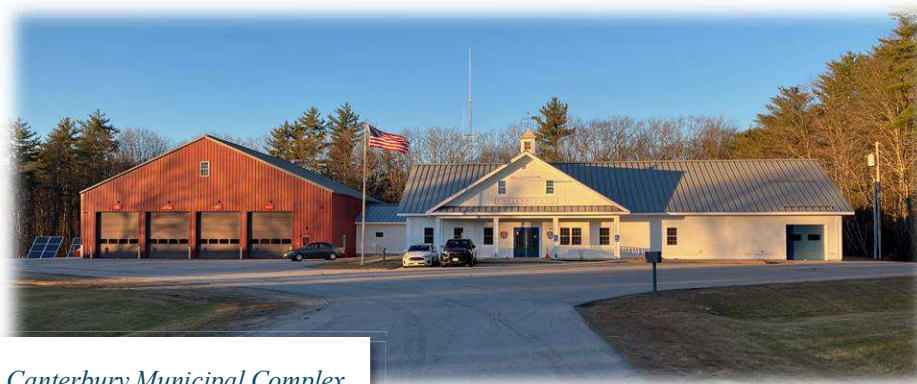
High priorities for the Community Facilities Chapter include:

- Continued efforts to improve broadband and cellular service and the exploration of community power with the goal of reducing electrical costs and establishing Canterbury as an energy conscious community.
- Annual updates to the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- Assessment of the Town's waste management and recycling program (including potential Household Hazardous Waste collections).
- Regular PFAS-type chemical water quality testing.





*Pitch Perfect at Canterbrook, Photo courtesy of HipCamp*



*Canterbury Municipal Complex*

## ***Natural Features***

Natural features impact the character and beauty of a town and the health, safety, and enjoyment of its residents, making them key in maintaining a strong and sustainable community. Certain development types and patterns that occur in town can significantly affect the natural makeup of the town, inextricably linking this chapter to the previous Land Use chapter. This chapter explores the past and present state of Canterbury's natural and scenic resources and suggests how they should be treated in the future.

High priorities for the Natural Features Chapter include:

- Support for the evaluation and improvement of zoning and subdivision regulations to limit cumulative adverse effects caused by scattered development on larger contiguous areas.
- Support for the protection of surface waters, groundwater, and watersheds to ensure clean drinking water for residents.
- The restriction of development on prime agricultural lands to ensure the ability to produce food locally for the benefit of local people and the economy.
- The conservation of landscapes and habitats that can mitigate climate change or be most resilient in adapting to climate change and maintaining the intangible qualities of rural character such as scenic quality, quiet, and rural roadways.
- Support for plant and wildlife habitat conservation before allowing development or changes to the natural environment in priority habitats and natural areas.
- The identification of opportunities to conserve streams, riparian corridors, and wildlife corridors that connect open spaces, encouragement for landowners to protect their remaining fields for agricultural use and to conduct operations in a sustainable manner.
- Identification of key town-owned properties along with the development of a stewardship plan to ensure that they are properly managed to enhance their value for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, agriculture, forest management,

- scenic enjoyment; and
- Support for funding for land conservation through continued use of 100% of the Land Use Change Tax for acquiring conservation land or easements or supporting such projects in town initiated by qualified organizations.



# 2 Vision

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**Overview:** A vision for Canterbury's future.

The Canterbury Plan for Tomorrow is created as a living document that is periodically updated. It articulates the vision, desires, and concerns of the community. It serves as a road map for the future. This Plan describes Canterbury today and the community's shared vision for the future. Most importantly, it defines what the Town will need to do over the next several years to fulfill that vision.

This Plan provides recommendations on ways to maintain or improve the features of the community and aims to serve as a blueprint for planning Canterbury's future. This Plan can help support economic development efforts, amendments to land use regulations, environmental and historic preservation efforts, expansion of community facilities and services, transportation enhancements, and much more over the next several years.

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**Elements:**     • Community Input     • Our Vision & How to Achieve It

## *Community Input*

The Town's Master Plan is intended to be the guidebook that supports the creation, interpretation, and implementation of laws and procedures which give shape and direction to the community. A Master Plan's purpose and description are outlined by New Hampshire statute (RSA 674:2), but it has no force of law and no way to generate the resources required for implementation. The Master Plan can be a powerful tool to help shape a community by giving suggested direction to appointed and elected officials for decision-making. However, the true power of the document is derived from the residents who approve the staffing, funding, regulatory alternatives, and strategies identified by this Plan.

Throughout the development of this Master Plan, engaging residents and other community stakeholders was a necessity. Two well-attended visioning sessions were held in June and October of 2022 and a community survey was also conducted in 2020 with over 200 responses. The visioning sessions and the survey both provided the Planning Board with important information on residents' opinions on many topics related to Canterbury's land use, housing, transportation, natural resources, community facilities, economic development, and many local priorities and concerns. Stakeholder attendance at Planning Board meetings related to master plan topics provided additional information and insight for this document.

Respondents and stakeholders were most supportive of small-scale farming, farming cooperatives, home occupation, outdoor recreation businesses, and restaurants as the preferred types of commercial development types. Keeping the Canterbury Center amenities as they currently stand was of high importance. Priorities for conservation and open space included wildlife corridors, wildlife and plant habitat, and large forest blocks. Favorite locations frequently mentioned in the Survey were Morrill Pond, Kimball Pond, Deepwood Forest, Shaker Village, the Merrimack River, and the Town Beach. Additional marked and maintained trails, more waterfront recreation, and a

Merrimack River boat launch were preferred Town recreational facilities. The community also expressed support for the construction of new facilities, including soccer fields, softball/baseball fields, and basketball courts.

Regarding housing in Canterbury, there was strong support for workforce and affordable housing that will continue to keep Canterbury accessible for all ages and incomes. This includes housing for downsizing seniors wishing to remain in Canterbury as well as homes for young families and those in the workforce. This desire for new housing reflects the needs of residents, but residents would also like to consider how to preserve and protect Canterbury's current landscape.

Community input highlighted residents' appreciation of the Town's rural landscape and small-town atmosphere, including a vast selection of natural resources, recreational opportunities, and the historical character of Canterbury Center. Concern was expressed about the current tax rate and its potential for forcing residents out of the community. To balance the traditional with contemporary needs, strong support was identified for additional commercial development in areas of Town which do not compromise Canterbury's rural character, including the areas around Exit 17 and 18 of I-93 and in the Commercial Zone along NH106.



Source: Town of Canterbury Website ([Canterbury-nh.org](http://Canterbury-nh.org))



## *From The Community Survey...*

"Welcoming, supportive,  
community oriented,  
neighbors helping neighbors,  
natural beauty"

"Maintain the rural  
character of Canterbury.  
Promote land  
conservation/open space and  
a vital Town Center"

"Expanding the tax base and  
supporting mixed uses"

"Opportunities for people  
who live here to work here"

"Need to balance services to  
lower the tax burden"

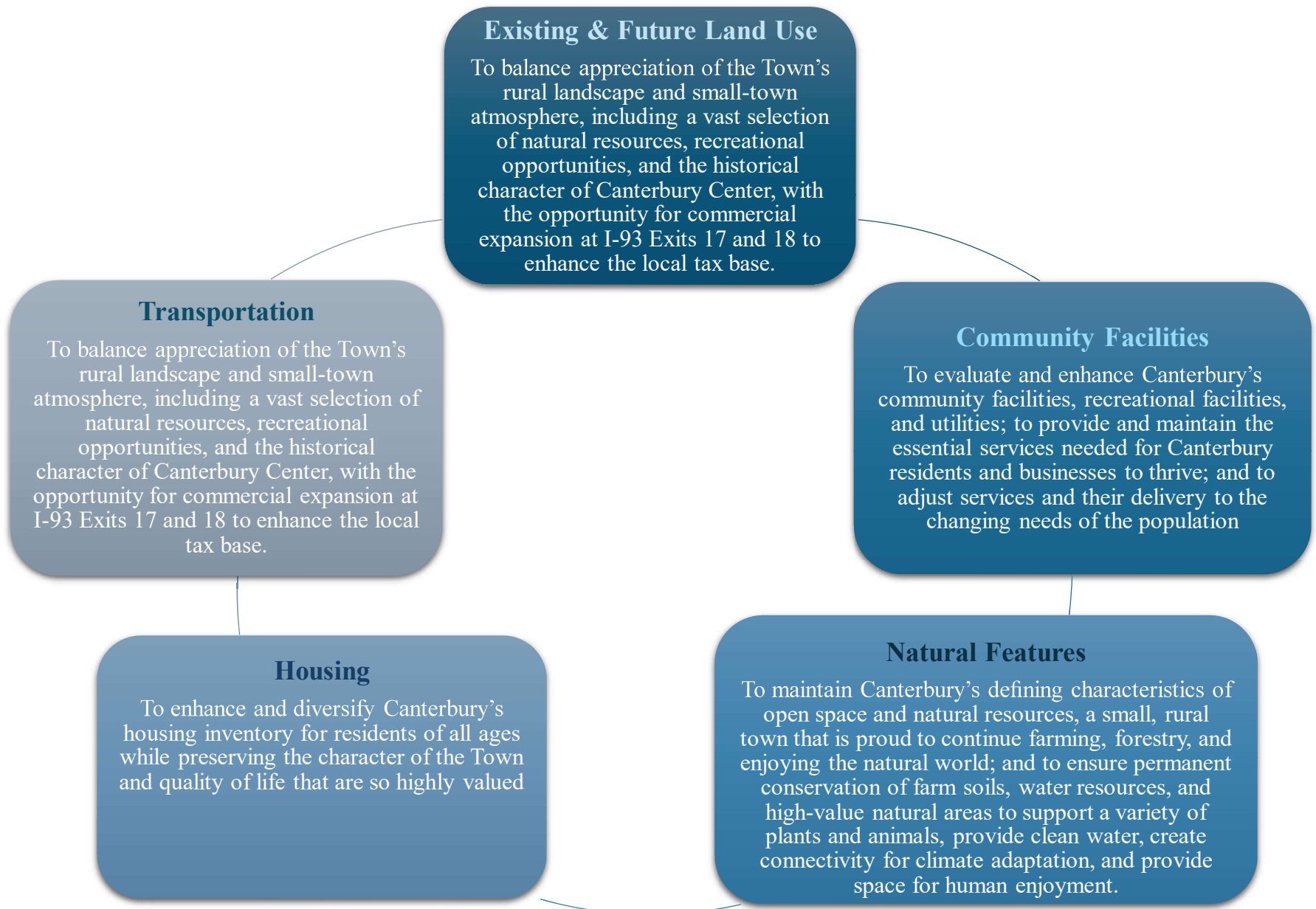
"A cross section of social  
economic diversity;  
Tradespeople, professionals,  
artists, agricultural, white &  
blue collar, and diverse age  
groups from young to old"

With limited municipal financial resources, respondents preferred town budget investment in road maintenance, fire protection, recycling, and police protection over other Town services. A strong desire for adequate broadband internet service and town-wide cellular coverage was expressed. The lack of both discourages home occupations, local businesses, emergency services and new residents from moving to Canterbury. Additional support for other emerging technologies, such as those for harvesting solar energy, may help to set Canterbury on a path to future success.



# ***Our Vision***

*The vision for Canterbury's future is crafted from what residents and community stakeholders value about the Town today, and what they hope to see in the Town for the future.*



# *How to Achieve the Vision*

*The following objectives are derived from each of the Master Plan's chapters. They reflect the long-term direction for Canterbury's future as a thriving community*

## LAND USE

- Encourage a mix of uses and densities in appropriate parts of town.
- Promote and preserve Canterbury's agricultural heritage.
- Continue to promote economic development in areas of town that are well-suited for business uses.
- Encourage the construction of housing for residents of all ages and income levels.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Preserve and maintain the existing conditions of the transportation system.
- Address capital improvement projects strategically important to Canterbury's transportation network.
- Prioritize safety for all modes of transportation.

## HOUSING

- Support a mix of housing densities and types in Canterbury.
- Promote the use of cluster subdivisions and other zoning tools to increase the availability of housing.
- Encourage the development of additional residential units that are smaller and more affordable to accommodate downsizing seniors and young families.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Develop the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) with annual updates to transparently engage in long-term planning for community facility and capital needs projects.
- Continue to evaluate options for obtaining widely available high-speed internet access, as well as address the need to increase reliable cellular service in town.
- Promote regular water quality testing and reporting for contaminants and PFAS-type chemicals by residents, businesses, and Town facilities.
- Explore Community Power options via the newly formed Community Power Committee with the goal of reducing electrical costs for all Canterbury customers.

## NATURAL FEATURES

- Conserve natural resources and habitats for plants and wildlife and promote climate resilience locally and regionally.
- Protect and conserve the resources that contribute to human health and quality of life, including clean air, clean water, and biological diversity.
- Conserve working landscapes for agriculture and forestry.
- Conserve land, water bodies, and landscapes that can maintain the Town's rural character and beauty and provide and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation for current and future generations.

## *Regional Concerns*

Canterbury can benefit from working regionally in many areas including population and housing growth, transportation improvements, natural resource protection, and watershed management.

Partnering with neighboring communities can cultivate strong momentum for projects that benefit Canterbury and the surrounding region. Shared services such as waste disposal, mutual aid, school systems, and emergency response sometimes make sense for smaller communities like Canterbury.

Wildlife corridors, habitat ecosystems, water bodies, and trail systems cross municipal borders, as do natural disasters. Broader approaches are required for successful protection and enhancement efforts.

Transportation networks are interconnected regionally, and most Canterbury residents travel out of the town for work and daily services. Ensuring all modes of transportation safely reach beyond the Town is essential for future success.





# 3 Implementation

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**Purpose:**    **Use of the Implementation Chapter**

The purpose of the Implementation Chapter is to help the Town’s boards, committees and residents continually utilize, review, and implement The Plan for Tomorrow. The 2023 Plan for Tomorrow contains the two statutorily required chapters, the Vision chapter, and the Existing and Future Land Use chapter. While these two chapters are the foundation of the Plan, other chapters were developed, including Canterbury Today (Demographics), Implementation, Transportation, Housing, Community Facilities, and Natural Features to provide a more rounded and detailed Plan for Tomorrow.

To develop the Implementation chapter, the Planning Board reviewed the many recommendations and identified the highest priorities. Those prioritized recommendations are included in the table beginning on page 3.3, sorted by chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, short-term is identified as through Town Meeting 2026, medium-term is 3 to 5 years, and long-term is 5 years and beyond. It was also noted if it was a priority to undertake the action on an ongoing basis.

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- Elements:**    Key Priorities & Implementation: Land Use    •    Key Priorities & Implementation: Transportation    •    Key Priorities & Implementation: Housing    •    Key Priorities & Implementation: Community facilities    •    Key Priorities & Implementation: Natural Features    •    Priorities Ranked: Community Input

# *Key Priorities and Implementation*

## LAND USE

In the Existing and Future Land Use chapter, key priorities include the encouragement of the use of the Cluster Development Ordinance by simplifying the ordinance and the consideration of a range of density incentives. This was also noted in the Housing chapter and was initiated with changes approved at Town Meeting 2024. Other key priorities include the consideration of possible changes in the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to direct development away from cleared fields and prime agricultural land to those areas of limited agricultural or conservation use. It is crucial to actively identify, inventory, protect, and maintain the features that define the rural character of the town. These features, such as dirt roads, stone walls, open land, the trail system, and old farm buildings, are of utmost priority.

## TRANSPORTATION

In the Transportation chapter, high priorities include monitoring and participation in project planning activities related to the NH 106 widening and the recently completed US 4 (Hoit Road), Old Boyce Road and Whitney Road Intersection Improvement projects, and the promotion and support of the existing services offered by the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Inc.

In addition, there is support for the exploration of options to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety such as construction of sidewalks and widening shoulders as appropriate and continuing to monitor safety issues in the vicinity of the Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road intersection.

## HOUSING

In the Housing chapter, high priorities include the previously noted support of cluster developments, support for mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Exits 17 and 18 to accommodate a mix of housing and small-scale retail/office uses, and the update the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to meet the

goals, policies and objectives described in this Plan update. Some of that implementation was addressed at Town Meeting 2024, including support for accessory dwelling units. Finally, there was supported to periodically reevaluate the existing “building permit cap.”

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Regarding Canterbury’s Community Facilities, high priorities include continued efforts to improve broadband and cellular service and the exploration of community power with the goal of reducing electrical costs and establishing Canterbury as an energy conscious community.

Furthermore, annual updates to the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), assessment of the Town’s waste management and recycling program (including potential Household Hazardous Waste collections), and regular PFAS-type chemical water quality testing were identified as high priorities.

## NATURAL FEATURES

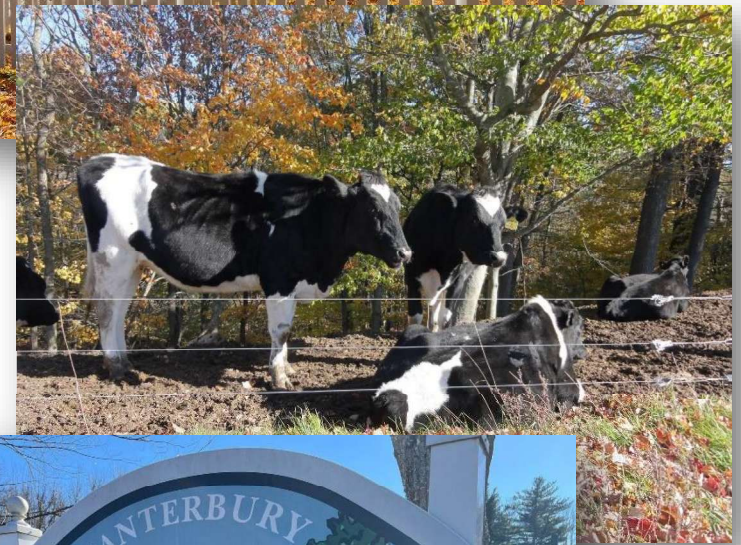
Key priorities of the Natural Features chapter included:

- Support for the evaluation and improvement of zoning and subdivision regulations to limit cumulative adverse effects caused by scattered development on larger contiguous areas.
- Support for the protection of surface waters, groundwater, and watersheds to ensure clean drinking water for residents.
- Restricting the use of prime agricultural lands to ensure the ability to produce food locally for the benefit of local people and the economy.
- The conservation of landscapes and habitats that can mitigate climate change or be most resilient in adapting to climate change.
- Maintaining the intangible qualities of rural character such as scenic quality, quiet, and rural roadways.
- Support for plant and wildlife habitat conservation prior to allowing development or changes to the natural environment in priority habitats/natural areas.

## ***Key Priorities and Implementation (continued)***

- The identification of opportunities to conserve streams, riparian corridors, and wildlife corridors that connect open spaces, encouragement for landowners to protect their remaining fields for agricultural use and to conduct operations in a sustainable manner.
- Identification of key town-owned properties along with the development of a stewardship plan to ensure that they are properly managed to enhance their value for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, agriculture, forest management, and scenic enjoyment.
- Support for funding for land conservation through continued dedication of 100% of the Land Use Change Tax to acquire conservation land or easements or supporting such projects in town initiated by qualified organizations.

It may be important to note that, while the above are the priorities and implementation recommendations highlighted by the Planning Board, it does not minimize the remaining recommendations found in the Plan. The highlighted tasks should be reviewed annually by the Planning Board to ascertain progress or reprioritize if necessary.



## Priority Ranking: Existing & Future Land Use

**Land Use, Objective One:** Encourage a mix of uses and densities in appropriate parts of town.

- ▷ Consider the development of mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Exits 17, 18 and Route 106 to include a mix of housing and small-scale retail/office service business uses.

Priority

Responsibility for Action

**\*\*ongoing/active**

Low	Medium	High	
	<b>**</b> ★		Planning Board



**Land Use, Objective Two: Promote and preserve Canterbury's agricultural heritage.**

- ▶ *Continue to identify, inventory, protect, and maintain features that make up the rural character of the Town, such as dirt roads, stone walls, open land, the trail system, and old farm buildings.*

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission

- ▶ *Consider possible changes in the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to direct development away from cleared fields and prime agricultural land to those areas of limited agricultural or conservation uses.*

		★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
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- ▶ *Continue identifying land that should be conserved for agricultural activity, forestry, wildlife habitat, water quality and recreation.*

	** ★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
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- ▶ *Augment agricultural map data with ground truthing to identify properties managed for agriculture and forestry.*

	★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
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- ▶ *Encourage landowners to make their agricultural land available for others to farm and maintain a list of those landowners willing to participate in such a program.*

	★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
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- ▷ *Maintain and enhance ordinances that facilitate small-scale agricultural operations.*

Priority  
\*\**ongoing/active*

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
	★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission

***Land Use, Objective Three:* Continue to promote economic development in areas of town that are well-suited for business.**

- ▷ *Consider modifications to the Industrial zone to allow for a mix of office, housing, and services businesses, and light industrial uses.*

**Priority**  
\*\*ongoing/active

**Responsibility for Action**

Low	Medium	High	
	★		Planning Board

- ▷ *Consider the designation of specific areas along NH 106 and the Exit 18 Commercial/Light Industrial zone as Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs).*

	★		Planning Board/Future Economic Development Committee
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- ▷ *Focus redevelopment and brownfields assessment efforts on the former gas station/convenience store site near Exit 18.*

		★	Board of Selectmen/Planning Board/Future Economic Development Committee
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**Land Use, Objective Four: Encourage the construction of housing for residents of all ages and income levels.**

- ▷ *Revise the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to reduce barriers for accessory dwelling units, senior housing, and low-impact outdoor recreation businesses.*

<u>Priority</u>			<u>Responsibility for Action</u>
<b>**ongoing/active</b>			
Low	Medium	High	
	** ★		Planning Board

- ▷ *Continue to periodically reevaluate the existing “building permit cap” and adjust a rate of growth that will enable Canterbury to assume its regional responsibilities while avoiding the strain of existing and planned Town services, schools, and roads. This growth rate should not lead to an adverse impact on the quality of life in Canterbury or unreasonable increases in Canterbury’s property taxes.*

	** ★		Planning Board
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- ▷ *Encourage the use of the Cluster Development Ordinance by simplifying the ordinance and the consideration of a range of density incentives.*

		** ★	Planning Board
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- ▷ *Update the Workforce Housing Ordinance to simplify and better promote Workforce Housing at an appropriate scale.*

		★	Planning Board
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## Priority Ranking: Transportation

*Transportation, Objective One:* Preserve and maintain the existing conditions of the transportation system.

- ▷ Regularly monitor data on existing roads, sidewalks, and paths including surface conditions and drainage.

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		*** ★	Board of Selectmen

- ▷ Promote and support the existing services offered to Canterbury residents by the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Inc. and CommuteSmart NH.

		*** ★	Board of Selectmen
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- ▷ Review NHDOT bridge inspection reports regularly to monitor bridge conditions and ensure that municipal bridges are maintained, repaired, and/or replaced when needed.

		*** ★	Board of Selectmen
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- ▷ Continue to implement asset management strategies including related to road surface condition and culvert and closed drainage systems.

	*** ★		Board of Selectmen
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***Transportation, Objective Two:*** Address capital improvement projects and studies strategically important to Canterbury's transportation network.

- ▶ *Monitor and participate in project planning activities related to the NH 106 widening and the US 4 (Hoit Road), Old Boyce Road and Whitney Road Intersection Improvement projects to ensure a positive impact in Canterbury.*

Priority  
\*\**ongoing/active*

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Board of Selectmen

- ▶ *Utilize available traffic count data to evaluate highways and roads that may be adversely impacted by future development trends.*

	** ★		Board of Selectmen
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- ▶ *Collaborate with adjacent communities and NHDOT to address maintenance and safety concerns on state-owned roads.*

	** ★		Board of Selectmen
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- ▶ *Work with State and regional agencies and surrounding towns to ensure that transportation projects that are eligible for Federal-Aid funding in Canterbury are adequately represented in the Regional TIP and considered for inclusion in the State Ten-Year Plan.*

		** ★	Board of Selectmen/Planning Board
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- ▶ *Proactively develop additional hiking and multi-use trails in Canterbury. Consider the formation of a Trails Committee to support the effort.*

	★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Future Trails Committee
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*Transportation, Objective Three: Prioritize safety for all modes of transportation.*

- ▷ *Review crash data on an annual basis and work with CNHRPC and NHDOT to identify enhancements that could be made to improve safety and compliance.*

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Board of Selectmen

- ▷ *Continue to monitor safety issues in the vicinity of the Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road intersection.*

		** ★	Board of Selectmen
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- ▷ *Explore options to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety such as construction of sidewalks and widening shoulders as appropriate.*

		** ★	Board of Selectmen
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- ▷ *Consider applying to the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) when addressing safety concerns.*

		** ★	Board of Selectmen
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## Priority Ranking: Housing


*Housing, Objective One:* Support a mix of housing densities and types in Canterbury.

- ▷ Consider the development of mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Exits 17 and 18 to accommodate a mix of housing and small- scale retail/office uses.

Priority

Responsibility for Action

**\*\*ongoing/active**

Low	Medium	High	
		<b>**</b> 	Planning Board



***Housing, Objective Two:*** Promote the use of cluster subdivisions and other zoning tools to increase the availability of housing.

- ▷ *Update the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to meet the goals, policies, and objectives described in the Plan for Tomorrow by utilizing but not being limited to the Innovative Land Use Controls granted by New Hampshire law to the Towns under RSA 674:16.II. and the methods contained in RSA 674:21.*

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board

- ▷ *Update the Workforce Housing Ordinance to simplify and better promote Workforce Housing at an appropriate scale.*

	** ★		Planning Board
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- ▷ *Encourage the use of the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance by simplifying the ordinance and the consideration of a range of density incentives.*

		** ★	Planning Board
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***Housing, Objective Three:* Encourage the development of additional residential units that are smaller and more affordable to accommodate downsizing seniors and young families.**

- ▷ *Revise the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations as necessary to support accessory apartments and senior housing, and the methods contained in RSA 674:21.*

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board

- ▷ *Continue to periodically reevaluate the existing “building permit cap” and adjust a rate of growth that will enable Canterbury to assume its regional responsibilities while not unduly straining existing and planned Town services, schools, and roads. This growth rate should not lead to an adverse impact on the quality of life in Canterbury or unreasonable increases in Canterbury’s property taxes.*

	** ★		Board of Selectmen/Planning Board
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## Priority Ranking: Community Facilities

**Community Facilities, Objective One:** Promote planning and implementation of measures related to the Town's infrastructure.

- ▶ Continue to evaluate options for obtaining widely available high-speed internet access, as well as address the need to increase reliable cellular service in town. Community-wide broadband is expected to be available by the end of 2024.

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
	** ★		Board of Selectmen

- ▶ Continue to support Community Power options via the newly formed Community Power Committee with the goal of reducing electrical costs for all Canterbury customers.

		** ★	Energy Committee/Canterbury Community Power Committee
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- ▶ Attract telecommunications tower and cellular providers to rural locations in Canterbury to provide complete cellular coverage across the community and update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure easier location and placement towers while blending with rural characteristics.

		** ★	Board of Selectmen/Planning Board
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***Community Facilities, Objective Two:*** Undertake long-range planning, testing and survey tasks to prepare for future needs.

- ▷ *Develop the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) with annual updates to transparently engage in long-term planning for community facility and capital needs projects.*

Priority  
\*\**ongoing/active*

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		★	Planning Board

- ▷ *Continue to assess Canterbury's waste management and recycling program, including potential Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections.*

		★	Board of Selectmen/Solid Waste Committee
--	--	---	--

- ▷ *Promote regular water quality testing for contaminants and PFAS-type chemicals by residents at their homes and report the results of the Town water systems and Transfer Station monitoring well testing.*

		★★★	Board of Selectmen
--	--	-----	--------------------



## Priority Ranking: Natural Features

*Natural Features, Objective One:* Conserve natural resources and habitats for plants and wildlife and to promote climate resilience locally and regionally.

- ▶ *Use improved natural resource data as it becomes available to identify areas of high priority for conservation.*

<u>Priority</u> ** <i>ongoing/active</i>			<u>Responsibility for Action</u>
Low	Medium	High	
	** ★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission

- ▶ *Conserve landscapes and habitats that can mitigate climate change or be most resilient in adapting to climate change.*

		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission
--	--	---------	--

- ▶ *Ensure funding for land conservation through continued dedication of 100% of the Land Use Change Tax to acquiring conservation land or easements or supporting such projects in town initiated by qualified organizations.*

		** ★	Board of Selectmen/Planning Board/Conservation Commission
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- ▶ *In priority habitats and natural areas, prioritize plant and wildlife habitat conservation before allowing development or changes to the natural environment.*

		★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
--	--	---	---

- ▶ *Encourage and support good stewardship of private land to support a variety of conservation goals and reduce potential adverse impacts of land management.*

		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/ Ag. Commission
--	--	---------	--

- ▷ *Evaluate Class VI roads to determine which should be converted to Class A trails or remain unimproved to protect large, unfragmented natural areas for conservation and recreation.*

Priority  
**\*\*ongoing/active**

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission

- ▷ *Identify opportunities to conserve streams, riparian corridors, and wildlife corridors that connect open spaces.*

		★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission
--	--	---	--

***Natural Features, Objective Two:* Protect and conserve the resources that contribute to human health and quality of life, including clean air, clean water, and biological diversity.**

- ▷ *Conserve large blocks of unfragmented land to support the multiple beneficial roles they play, including wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor recreation, climate resilience, and economic stimulus to the Town. Where possible, cooperate with adjacent towns to conserve large areas that cross Town borders.*

Priority  
\*\*ongoing/active

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission

- ▷ *Protect surface waters, groundwater, and watersheds to ensure clean drinking water for residents.*

		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission
--	--	---------	--

- ▷ *Encourage the use of the best technologies and other methods to promote clean air.*

	** ★		Bord of Selectmen/Planning Board/Conservation Commission
--	---------	--	--

### *Natural Features, Objective Three: Conserve working landscapes for agriculture and forestry.*

- ▷ *Restrict development on prime agricultural lands to ensure the ability to produce food locally for the benefit of local people and the economy.*

Priority  
\*\**ongoing/active*

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission

- ▷ *Encourage landowners to protect their remaining fields for agricultural use and to conduct operations in a sustainable manner.*

		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
--	--	---------	---

- ▷ *Support responsible agricultural and forestry endeavors for production of food, wood, and other products for local use and economic benefit.*

	** ★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
--	---------	--	---

- ▷ *Accommodate evolving trends in agriculture and consider the unique needs of agricultural operations, especially very small-scale operations.*

	★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
--	---	--	---

- ▷ *Encourage residents to follow best management practices in agriculture, forestry, pollution control, trail building, and other activities to minimize adverse impacts on environmental health.*

		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission
--	--	---------	---



▷ *Evaluate whether any town-owned properties should be designated as Town Forests.*

Priority  
**\*\*ongoing/active**

Responsibility for Action

Low	Medium	High	
	★		Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Ag. Commission

***Natural Features, Objective Four:* Conserve land, waterbodies, and landscapes that can maintain the Town’s rural character and beauty and provide and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation for current and future generations.**

- ▷ *Identify key Town-owned properties and develop a stewardship plan to ensure that they are effectively managed to enhance their value for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, agriculture, forest management, scenic enjoyment, and to demonstrate good stewardship of natural resources.*

<u>Priority</u>			<u>Responsibility for Action</u>
**ongoing/active			
Low	Medium	High	
		** ★	Planning Board/Conservation Commission

- ▷ *Establish a Town Trails Committee to coordinate the preservation and improvement of trails to provide public access to a variety of natural areas and to manage all aspects of trail maintenance and use.*

	** ★		Board of Selectmen/Conservation Commission
--	---------	--	--

- ▷ *Encourage landowners to arrange for permanent protection of important habitats, natural areas, and scenic resources.*

		** ★	Conservation Commission
--	--	---------	-------------------------

- ▷ *Evaluate and improve zoning and subdivision regulations to limit cumulative adverse effects caused by scattered development on larger contiguous areas.*

		** ★	Planning Board
--	--	---------	----------------

- ▷ *Maintain the intangible qualities of rural character such as scenic quality, quiet, and rural roadways.*

		** ★	Board of Selectmen/Conservation Commission
--	--	---------	--

# 4 Existing & Future Land Use

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**Overview:** The goals and policies for the use of Canterbury land established in this chapter are consistent with historical patterns and with the residents' desire to preserve Canterbury's rural and residential character. Future development should be evaluated by its impact on the character of the Town, as well as by its impact on both the cost of Town services and the general quality of life in Canterbury. The experience of other towns demonstrates that unplanned, uninhibited growth leads to a change in the Town's character along with higher taxes. Once begun, neither trend can easily be reversed.

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**Elements:**

- Discussion of Land Use Over the Years
- Current Land Use Data
- Challenges and Recommendations

## *From the Community Survey*

**"I would like to see  
Canterbury be welcoming  
of new families and also to  
be easier for seniors to live  
in"**

**"Remain an oasis of forests  
and wildlife"**

**"Open to business  
development at Exits 17  
and 18"**

**"Lacks a gathering place"**

**"Family-friendly, not over-  
developed"**

**"Keep it small"**

**"Protect and promote  
agriculture and historical  
heritage"**

## *The Town's Thoughts*

Input received through the Community Survey highlighted residents' appreciation of the Town's rural landscape and small-town atmosphere, including an abundance of natural resources, recreational opportunities, and historical character of Canterbury center and Canterbury Shaker Village.

Concern was expressed about the current tax rate and its potential to force residents out of the community. With that, there is a strong support for additional commercial development in areas of Town that would not compromise Canterbury's rural character, including the area around Interstate 93 Exits 17 and 18 and in the Commercial Zone along NH Route 106. Additional support was given for stand-alone retail development and offices in the commercial zone.

Support for preserving Canterbury's rural character was further demonstrated through residents' support of certain zoning regulations, as shown in the graphic on page 4.3. This includes preserving agricultural land, retaining large blocks of unfragmented land, preserving wildlife corridors, restricting development in wetlands, and preserving open space.

Additionally, 60% of respondents noted that they can hear noise from the New Hampshire Motor Speedway on their property.



# History of Land Use in Canterbury

Canterbury was once home to the members of the Penacook-Abenaki tribe, who lived around Concord and along the Merrimack River. When the first settlers reached Canterbury toward the end of the 18th century, their primary concern was to clear enough land so they could pasture their cattle and produce crops and enough food for their families.

Given the rocky nature of Canterbury's hillsides and the fact that many settlers built their homes high in the hills, agricultural activity was a constant struggle. Land use in those days was focused on meeting basic needs. Until the 1950s, Canterbury land was used almost exclusively for agriculture: raising livestock and crops, harvesting timber, and making maple syrup. Land values were determined by agricultural productivity.

Beginning slowly in the 1930s and continuing more rapidly since the 1950s, residences began to appear that were not affiliated with farming. Land became a commodity bought and sold for residential development. Development, agricultural, and forestry uses have coexisted since then, but land sold for residential development has a cash value higher than land kept in agricultural use. Home based businesses have gradually expanded during the past 40 years. During the past 25 years, the proliferation of the internet and computer technologies has enabled many service-related and consulting businesses to thrive as home occupations. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic further increased the number of people who worked from home. This shift is likely to have a lasting effect on how people in Canterbury use their homes for work and business.

## Key Findings

Canterbury is similar to other rural towns in New Hampshire, but it does differ from surrounding towns in a number of respects. The following are some key findings regarding Canterbury's land use challenges:

- There is a great appreciation of Canterbury's agricultural heritage and strong interest in retaining its rural character. Protecting agricultural uses and preserving farmland is a high priority. Various methods for doing so should be employed. At the same time, there is interest in expanding the tax base and supporting mixed uses near Interstate 93, Exits 17 and 18.
- Residents are concerned about the lack of housing available for different age groups and income levels. Based on the survey there is significant interest in exploring ways to increase housing options through adjustments to land use regulations, such as cluster development, accessory dwelling units, and workforce housing ordinances.
- There is a desire for additional economic development near the highway exits, as well as along the NH Route 106 corridor. Consideration should be given to creating Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs) and revising zoning rules to expand the variety of allowed uses. The abandoned gas station at Exit 18 is one opportunity to enhance the tax base through redevelopment.

## Existing Land Use

In the past, the distribution of residences in town was determined either by the suitability of farmland or the proximity to an existing village. Current ten-year patterns show a trend towards the development of land designated for single-family homes. Single-family residences are widely distributed across the community. The Town Center, Sherwood Forest development, and the southwest corner of the Town form the primary centers of population. Residential development is distributed throughout the Town along the main paved roads and the more-traveled dirt roads. There are a few small commercial establishments located in the center of Town and near Exits 17 and 18 of Interstate 93.

Agricultural uses are scattered across the community and are a principal feature of the Town's rural character. At present, agricultural land is an important resource of the Town. This land provides a variety of values and uses including local food production, preservation of open space, historic character, and incidental recreation. Some of the agricultural products produced in the Town include maple syrup, apples and other orchard fruit, horticultural plants, livestock, dairy, fiber, vegetables, forage crops, and timber. There are a few large commercial agricultural businesses and many smaller agricultural operations in Town.

Land Use Initiatives Supported by Canterbury Residents and Landowners	Percentage
Stand-alone retail in the commercial zone	64.1%
Stand-alone offices in the commercial zone	78.3%
Development in Commercial Zone at I-93 Exit 17	75.0%

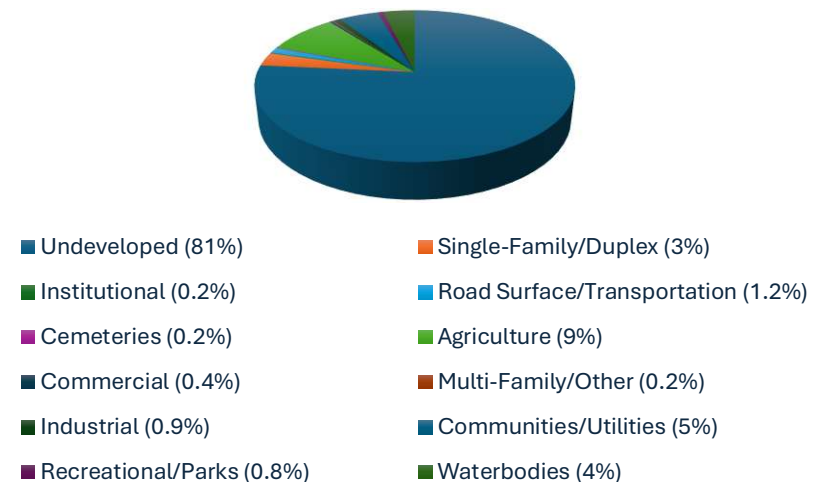
## Private Lands

Privately owned lands constitute the largest percentage of the lands in Town. Landowners have traditionally opened their lands to hunting, fishing and recreation; this provides environmental and aesthetic benefits to the public. Based on longstanding tradition, land in New Hampshire that is not posted against a specific use can be accessed by the public. State law (RSA 508:14, Landowner Liability Limited) protects landowners from liability if they allow free use of their land. Current Use taxation greatly reduces the property taxes on undeveloped privately owned land. (See chapter 8, Natural Resources). There are a number of formal and informal recreational trails throughout the Town.

## Publicly Owned Land and Public Access

Canterbury also has many properties with stipulated public access including land owned by the State of New Hampshire, land owned by the Town, and land owned by private parties with public access secured by conservation easement. *See Conservation Lands Map and Index of Conservation Properties in Chapter 8 for a complete list of conservation lands.*

Land Use Percentage by Category



## *Notable State-Owned Lands*

### SHAKER STATE FOREST

#### **(250 Acres)**

Located on and accessible from NH 106, just north of the New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, east of Shaker Village. It is managed by the NH Division of Forest and Lands.

### AYERS STATE FOREST

#### **(50 Acres)**

Located along the Northfield town line in the northwest part of Town. It is managed by the Division of Forest and Lands.

### MORRILL MILL POND

#### **(70 Acres)**

Located along Morrill Road in the southern portion of the Town. It is managed by the NH Division of Forest and Lands.

### MUCHYEDO BANKS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (THE CANTERBURY OXBOW)

#### **(290 Acres)**

Located on the Merrimack River, north of Exit 17, is managed by NH Fish and Game. It contains 290 acres.

## *Notable Municipal-Owned Lands*

### TOWN CENTER

Includes a covered gazebo on the Town green, the historic Town Hall, the new Elkins Library, the Elizabeth Houser Museum, a shared parking area, the Elkins Memorial Building (former library) and adjacent lot, the Town Offices located in the Sam Lake House, The Sam Lake House Garage, and a fire pond adjacent to the Sam Lake House.

### THE MUNICIPAL CENTER COMPLEX

On Baptist Road, just up the hill from the Town Center and across from the Canterbury Elementary School. The property houses the Police, Fire & Rescue, and Highway Departments in a large, multi-use building.

### TRANSFER STATION

East of Town Center on Baptist Road. The Station has an enclosed recycling and transfer station. The garage building houses two refuse trucks.

## **Housing and Land Use**

Housing needs in Canterbury are changing as demographics evolve and the average age of the population increases, and older residents look to downsize. There are also challenges for first-time home buyers and young families to find suitable affordable housing.

As described in the Housing Chapter, these two groups are competing for the same housing. What is needed to address this issue in Canterbury is more affordable housing, a greater variety of housing types, and consideration for increased density in some areas. Mixed use development and cluster developments can address some of the need. Such developments allow for greater density which can lower cost by reducing the length of roads. Cluster subdivisions also can further conservation efforts by ranking and prioritizing the type of open space the community would like to see preserved. The town may want to rank and prioritize the type of open space that should be conserved and then offer density incentives to subdivisions that propose to conserve those high value lands. Another approach is to include density incentives for smaller homes in a subdivision, such as two- and three-bedroom, single-family homes, and giving preference to Canterbury seniors or first-time home buyers.

An additional approach is a streamlined review of the approval process, as this will save time and money for those constructing housing. Reviewing the Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations to assess clarity, predictability, and ease of use will identify changes that can be made to the approval process that will help applicants, the land use boards, and the Town.

## *Development Constraints*

Land development projects are typically affected by a range of natural and artificial (human-facilitated) restrictions. These limitations to development have been charted and are shown on the *Development Constraints Map* and what follows are a series of brief descriptions of these various limitations to development.

**WETLANDS** are areas where water is present at or near the soil surface for at least part of the growing season and influences the plants that can grow there, as well as the soil characteristics. There is now a much greater understanding of the function that wetlands provide, including flood control, water storage, groundwater recharge, erosion and sediment control, pollution filtration and wildlife habitat. Based on GIS data provided by NH GRANIT, Canterbury has 2,450 acres of wetlands including water bodies located throughout town, or approximately 9% of Canterbury's total land area, respectively.

**FLOODPLAINS** are areas that have the potential to carry and store floodwater, also termed flood storage land. Preserving the floodplain's ability to store this excess water is key to protecting surrounding land uses, especially as the frequency and severity of storms increase. An examination of these floodplain areas indicates that they are mostly open lands used for agriculture. Additional areas of concern are found along the Merrimack River near Interstate 93. There are 2,017 acres of 100-year floodplain in Town, or 7% of Canterbury's area.

**STEEP SLOPES**, greater than 15% are present in areas throughout Canterbury and create a number of difficulties and dangers associated with development. Overall, approximately 3,951 acres (or 14% of Canterbury's total land area) is considered a steep slope.

**AQUIFERS** are sometimes quite large, underground deposits of porous rock, sand and other similar earth materials containing water into which wells can be sunk. Information obtained from the U. S. Geological Survey indicates that a high yield stratified drift aquifer is located in the northwestern part of town near the

boundary with Northfield (Exit 18 area). Less significant aquifer deposits are also located along much of the Merrimack.

**DRINKING WATER** is provided to the community exclusively through private wells, so protecting aquifers from contamination is extremely important.

**WASTEWATER (SEPTIC)** treatment is provided to the community exclusively through private septic systems.

### **PUBLIC LANDS**

The Town of Canterbury, along with other public entities or agencies, possesses various public lands throughout town, many of which are protected. The largest protected contiguous areas of land are held by Canterbury Shaker Village, Sloping Acres farm, and Brookford Farm. Other protected lands include parcels protected by conservation easements, fee ownership, open space, and deed restrictions. Specific easements and protected lands can be seen on the Conserved Lands Map. There is an estimated 5,340 acres of conservation land across public and private ownership in Canterbury, or 19% of the total land area in town.

Developments within a quarter mile of the Merrimack River are also subject to review by the Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee (UMRLAC) and a possible review by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.



Blue Skies over Canterbury Riverland



# Land Use Regulations

## Canterbury's Zoning

The ability to regulate private property is one of the most important tools allocated to local government. Used properly, zoning can improve the aesthetics of a community, protect the natural environment, raise the quality of life, and increase property values. Used improperly, zoning can serve special interests, harm the natural environment, and increase socioeconomic inequality.

In 1925, the New Hampshire State Legislature, using a United States Department of Commerce Model Standard Act, granted municipalities the ability to adopt zoning. Canterbury first adopted a basic zoning ordinance in 1956. In the 1970s, revisions were made to discourage large-scale residential subdivisions and encourage the preservation of large tracts of open space. In the late 1970s, Canterbury was one of the first towns in New Hampshire to place an annual limitation on building permits for new residences.

## Canterbury's 8 Primary Zoning Districts

*Refer to the Zoning District Map for additional information.*

Almost half (49%) of all land within the town of Canterbury is zoned as Agriculture/Conservation(A). **The purpose of this district is:**

---

*"To reserve those areas of steep slope and severe soils limitations, primarily for conservation, agriculture and forestry purposes. These areas shall serve as open space and agricultural resources to protect the stream sources and scenic qualities of the town from encroachment. To preserve open lands and especially those areas identified by the USDA Soil Conservation Service as important farmlands."*

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Single-family homes are permitted with a minimum lot size of five buildable acres and a minimum road frontage of 300 feet. A limited number of commercial uses are permitted that are specifically related to agriculture. Home business can be approved by special exception.

The **Rural Zone District (RU)** is the second largest in Canterbury and comprises 25.7% of the total land area of the town. **The purpose of this district is:**

---

*"To reserve from most intensive development those elements served primarily by gravel roads, thus minimizing the cost of additional municipal services and preserving the character of the community."*

Most agricultural uses are permitted as a use by right in this district and institutional uses and a few commercial uses are allowed by special exception. Single-family homes are allowed with a minimum of three buildable acres and 300 feet of road frontage; duplexes are permitted by right and multi-family dwellings by special exception with an additional 2.25 buildable acres per unit.

The **Natural Resource District (NR)** encompasses 9.3% of the town's land area. **The purpose of this district is:**

---

*"To acknowledge those areas of high natural resources value as community assets which must be conserved by special consideration of the impact of uses in these areas."*

Agricultural uses are permitted by right, but other uses, including institutional, limited commercial, and residential (single and two- family) are permitted only by special exception. Other uses are not allowed. The minimum lot size for a single-family residence with a special exception is ten buildable acres with a minimum road frontage of 300 feet.

## The Potential Role of an Economic Development Committee

It takes a great deal of effort and momentum to undertake an appropriate level of economic development in a small community like Canterbury. An Economic Development Committee could assist in promoting some of the potential tools described in this chapter. The charge of the EDC could be as follows:

- Encourage development in the potential new mixed-use districts in the vicinity of Exits 17 and 18.
- Publicize the Town to potential new businesses who might consider locating in the Industrial Zone near Exit 18.
- Lead the effort to develop Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs) in the Industrial Zone and along NH Route 106.
- Participate in planning and coordination related to the expansion/improvement of broadband services in Canterbury.
- Create an inventory of commercial/industrial parcels in Canterbury and identify potential areas for future development.
- Focus on the areas in the vicinity of Exits 17 and 18 and the NH 106 corridor for future commercial development.
- Emphasize redevelopment and brownfields assessment efforts on the former gas station/convenience store site near Exit 18.
- Coordinate and seek out support for businesses from local, state, federal, and regional organizations and the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NH BEA), Division of Economic Development, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

## Canterbury's Zoning (continued)

The Residential District (R) is the fourth largest zone and covers approximately 8.2% of Canterbury. **The purpose of this district is:**

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*“To identify areas suitable for development served by continuous paved roads and in locations which provide access to collector roads and services.”*

---

This zone has the smallest minimum lot size of two buildable acres, with a minimum of 300 feet of road frontage. Permitted uses include single-family residences and duplexes and agricultural uses. Multi-family dwellings are permitted by special exception.

The remaining four zone districts comprise less than 8% of the total land area in town combined. The Commercial District (C) and Industrial District (I) comprise a little more than 4% of the town's area and almost all its nonresidential tax base. The other two districts are the Center Historic District (CHD) and Shaker Village Museum Preservation District (SVMPD).

There are also two overlay districts for Workforce Housing and Aquifer & Groundwater Protection.



Canterbury Shaker Village



## *Management of Development*

Starting in 1990, a more holistic approach was taken with zoning revisions. Tools for growth management have been used to ensure that land use is consistent with the land's ability to support human activity, and to ensure that development takes place in an orderly, harmonious and sustainable way.

The Town's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision, and Site Plan Review Regulations and the Plan for Tomorrow have been developed to foster the following goals:

- 1 To conserve buildings and districts, rural qualities, and diversity of population that makes Canterbury special to those who live here.
- 2 To provide for orderly and sustainable population growth and development while meeting fair share growth forecasts.
- 3 To encourage growth and development in those areas of the Town that are most suitable for development and most accessible to existing and planned services.
- 4 To reduce sprawl in the less developed areas of Town with poor road access and high conservation values.
- 5 To provide for orderly expansion of Town services to accommodate reasonable growth.
- 6 To maintain and extend the present balance and diversity in Canterbury's housing stock by providing a broad range of housing opportunities.
- 7 To protect and enhance property values by assuring that development is compatible with neighboring properties and is generally conducive to the economic well-being of the Town.
- 8 To preserve and encourage agricultural use of the land by adopting agricultural- friendly ordinances and policies.

### **Mixed Use**

Mixed use villages are an important part of Canterbury's heritage. Canterbury Center and Shaker Village are two of the Town's most cherished assets, along with its woods, wetlands, and pastoral landscapes. Today neither of these villages could be built under the Town's current zoning ordinance, which prohibits multi-use buildings and the small lot sizes typical in a village.

Allowing this village-type of development in specific areas with good access could help to expand the Town's commercial tax base, as well as expand the choices for the types of residences for its citizens. Canterbury's two exits on Interstate 93 and its frontage along NH Route 106 are areas of opportunity where a new mixed- use village might be built. Exit 18, in particular, offers many possibilities with a vacant commercial site, nearby buildable land, a New Hampshire Park and Ride location, as well as an active rail line. To attract small-scale, village-type development, Canterbury would first need to permit it in some form in its zoning ordinance.



*Front loader at  
Canterbury  
Transfer Station*

## ***Management of Development and Growth (continued)***

In 2019, the Town passed an ordinance allowing Accessory Dwelling Units on some existing properties. The ordinance creates the opportunity to create additional housing in Town. Ideally, this ordinance will encourage new construction on already developed properties, more affordable housing, multigenerational housing, and income to offset property taxes.

In the Community Survey, a large majority of respondents support maintaining Canterbury's rural, residential, and small-town atmosphere. Clearly there is an overwhelming desire to preserve Canterbury's character and to manage growth through a wise land use policy. The traditional rural landscape of some towns in this part of New Hampshire has given way to types of development which destroy the historic rural character, such as building houses and condominiums in the center of open fields, or by dividing land so that it can never again be used for agricultural, or forestry uses. These other towns have also discovered that rapid residential growth can dramatically increase property taxes. Under current tax laws, residential development does not pay for itself unless the homes are very expensive or are vacation homes.

Residential development has not overwhelmed Canterbury. This is partially a result of zoning and subdivision regulations enacted in the 1970s, which discouraged large-scale development of residential tracts, and encouraged the preservation of open space. In the late 1970s, Canterbury was among the first communities to enact an annual limit on building permits for new residential construction. This limitation, commonly referred to as the "building permit cap," is re-examined by the Planning Board no less frequently than every two years to ensure that the cap adequately addresses regional housing needs and population trends (see Article 11 of the Canterbury Zoning Ordinance). The annual permit cap for new, single-family residential construction is currently set at 3% of the existing single-family dwellings.

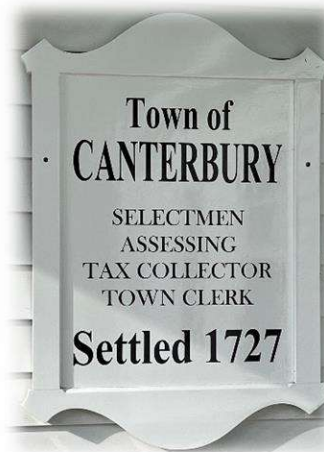
There is a separate permit cap for the new multi-family residential construction. The building permit cap has had the beneficial effect of enabling Canterbury to largely avoid the "boom and bust" building cycle endured by many of our neighboring communities in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Significantly, only during the ill-fated residential building boom of the late 1980s did the demand for single family building permits exceed the building permit cap. Since the early 1990s, the number of building permits requested and issued for single-family dwellings has never come close to reaching the annual building permit cap. If, in the future, single-family dwellings were constructed at the rate currently allowed by the building permit cap, the number of single-family dwellings would double in about 33 years.

Local zoning, subdivision, and site plan review regulations are not the only factors affecting the amount and type of development in Canterbury. Constraints on development include poor access to broadband and many dirt roads. Other constraints to development in addition to lack of town water and septic include such physical limitations as steep terrain, soils unsuitable for septic systems, State wetlands regulations, conservation easements and public land. However, it should be noted that perhaps the most important factor impacting growth in Canterbury is the one over which the Town exerts the least control - the health of the regional and statewide economy.

Since Canterbury's growth has been slow in recent years, why should the Town be concerned with the possibility of increased growth in the future?

## *Ten (10) Factors Which Could Significantly Increase Canterbury's Future Rate of Development...*

- I.** *Increased regional development, particularly at exit 17.*
- II.** *Higher taxes on undeveloped land could force the sale of this land.*
- III.** *Growth of remote working opportunities in response to COVID-19 and improved internet access.*
- IV.** *Widening of I-93 through Bow-Concord.*
- V.** *Out-migration from urban centers due to COVID-19 concerns.*
- VI.** *Increased land values motivating long-time landowners to sell property due to capital appreciation.*
- VII.** *A strong regional economy, creating more demand for housing.*
- VIII.** *A monetary appreciation of land values, subsequently causing traditional uses, such as agriculture and forestry, to be less feasible.*
- IX.** *Outdated and inadequate zoning and subdivision.*
- X.** *High estate taxes, ultimately forcing subdivision or sale of large parcels of land, as a result of poor estate planning.*





## *New Challenges and Concerns*

### *No Town is an Island unto Itself*

There are economic, technological, demographic, and social changes that continue to affect our entire nation and the State of New Hampshire. Canterbury is not immune to these changes. Among other issues that have arisen nationally and regionally, the Town of Canterbury has been presented with its own, specific challenges. These include issues involving workforce housing shortages; transportation congestion and cost; energy demands and new energy sources and new transmission technologies; infrastructure needs; limits on roads, broadband connectivity limitations; water supply limitations; waste management logistics; rising property taxes; and climate change adaptation.



Canterbury Town Center

## ***Objectives and Recommendations***

*It is important to remain aware of potential changes in our community and what those changes could mean to the rural character, tax structure, and quality of life in Canterbury. There is a need for widespread public understanding of how development forces can exert tremendous pressures to subdivide larger properties. Without this awareness, Canterbury will not be able to preserve the unique and extraordinary beauty of this Town nor assure our children the opportunity to live in a Town such as we now have. Canterbury also needs to identify steps the community can take to guide the future development of the Town in order to preserve its rural character and scenic beauty, and to control the cost of local government.*

### ***Objective One***

Encourage a mix of uses and densities in appropriate parts of town.

- 1 Consider the development of mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Exits 17, 18 and Route 106 to include a mix of housing and small-scale retail/office service business uses.

### ***Objective Two***

Promote and preserve Canterbury's agricultural heritage

- 1 Continue to identify, inventory, protect, and maintain features that make up the rural character of the Town, such as dirt roads, stone walls, open land, the trail system, and old farm buildings.
- 2 Continue identifying land that should be conserved for agricultural activity, forestry, wildlife habitat, water quality and recreation.
- 3 Encourage landowners to make their agricultural land available for others to farm and maintain a list of those landowners willing to participate in such a program.
- 4 Consider possible changes in the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to direct development away from cleared fields and prime agricultural land to those areas of limited agricultural or conservation uses.
- 5 Augment agricultural map data with ground truthing to identify properties managed for agriculture and forestry.
- 6 Maintain and enhance ordinances that facilitate small-scale agricultural operations.

### *Objective Three*

#### Continue to promote economic development in areas of town that are well-suited for business uses.

- 1 Consider modifications to the Industrial zone to allow for a mix of residential, office, retail business, and light industrial/manufacturing uses.
- 2 Focus redevelopment and brownfields assessment efforts on the former gas station/convenience store site near Exit 18.
- 3 Consider the designation of specific areas along NH 106 and the Exit 18 Commercial/Light Industrial zone as Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs).

### *Objective Four*

#### Encourage the construction of housing for residents of all ages and income levels

- 1 Revise the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to reduce barriers for accessory dwelling units, elderly housing, bed and breakfasts, and low-impact outdoor recreation businesses.
- 2 Encourage the use of the Cluster Development Ordinance by simplifying the ordinance and the consideration of a range of density incentives.
- 3 Continue to periodically reevaluate the existing “building permit cap” and adjust a rate of growth that will enable Canterbury to assume its regional responsibilities while not unduly straining existing and planned Town services, schools, and roads. This growth rate should not lead to an adverse impact on the quality of life in Canterbury or unreasonable increases in Canterbury’s property taxes.
- 4 Update the Workforce Housing Ordinance to simplify and better promote Workforce Housing at an appropriate scale.



# 5 Transportation

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**Overview:** Transportation encompasses vehicular traffic on Town roads and State highways, as well as trail development, public transit, volunteer driver programs, and transportation demand management. Canterbury's transportation system and its connection to the regional and state network provides access to goods and services required by residents and commerce.

This chapter will document the existing conditions and trends of the transportation network, identify how maintenance and improvements are funded, and describe basic principles for planning a transportation network that meets the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses in Canterbury.

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**Elements:**

- Overview of Canterbury's Transportation System
- Transportation Data and Trends
- Challenges and Recommendations

## *From the Community Survey*

**"I would like to see  
Canterbury be  
welcoming of new  
families and also to be  
easier for seniors to live  
in"**

**"Remain an oasis of  
forests and wildlife"**

**"Open to business  
development at Exits 17  
and 18"**

**"Lacks a gathering  
place"**

**"Family-friendly, not  
over-developed"**

**"Keep it small"**

**"Protect and promote  
agriculture and  
historical heritage"**

## *The Town's Thoughts*

As part of the Community Survey, the focus was to learn about residents' concerns related to road segments and intersections.

The most popular intersection mentioned in need of improvement was the intersection of Morrill Road and Kimball Pond Road. Residents noted safety concerns, site distance, and maintenance issues. Almost as many residents mentioned concerns with the Baptist Road and Shaker Road intersection. Some commented on safety issues and others responded that they would like to see the center island removed. A handful of people commented generally about changing "Y" type intersections in Town to "T" intersections. The NH132/New Road/ Boyce Road Intersection, as well as NH132 and West Road, NH 132 and Old Tilton Road, and NH 132 and Center Road intersections are all "Y" type that residents cited with safety concerns.

Baptist Road was the most referenced road that residents felt needs improvement, many citing its surface condition as the main problem. Other roads including Old Gilmanton Road, Clough Pond Road, New Road, West Road, and NH 132 were mentioned by multiple residents. There was some mention of bicycle and pedestrian improvement focused on crosswalks in the Town Center and concerns with road shoulders being too narrow for bicycling.

When asked if the Town should provide recreational facilities, and of what type, 69 out of 208 residents selected more marked trails and maintained trails as their highest priority. Furthermore, when asked about multi-use trails, 113 respondents cited hiking as their favored activity if the Town were to develop, maintain, and conserve trails for a variety of uses.

A question within the community survey pertaining to allocating tax dollars showed that respondents consider road maintenance to be the most important investment over the next 10 years.

## Transportation in Canterbury

The Town of Canterbury is served by Interstate 93 to the west of Town and NH Route 106 on its eastern side. NH 132 parallels I-93 and enables a high level of mobility for local traffic. A small stretch of US 4 intersects the southwest corner of Town as it runs from Boscawen to the I-93 interchange in Concord. Other State roads span Canterbury connecting the local roads to the regional and statewide highway network.

Historic village areas have profoundly influenced where people have settled, but the railroad, I-93, and NH 106 have influenced industry and commercial development in parts of town.

Canterbury is served by two full access interchanges along I-93 at Exit 17 and Exit 18.

Just west of the Exit 17 interchange on US 4, a two-lane roundabout was newly constructed to serve commercial development on Merchants Way. At Exit 18, remnants of a historic bridge on West Road and a rail yard along the B&M rail line are evidence of an ever-changing transportation network and the role infrastructure has played in development throughout Canterbury.

The interstate has strongly influenced Canterbury and its development, but the historic and rural areas foster the town's character that residents and visitors hope to preserve.

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### Vision Statement

*To provide a well-maintained and safe transportation system that meets the Town's needs; encourage a transportation system that will meet the mobility needs of all residents by providing for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within Canterbury and throughout the region; continue to develop trails for transportation and recreation; and support planning for future improvements.*

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## Transportation Network

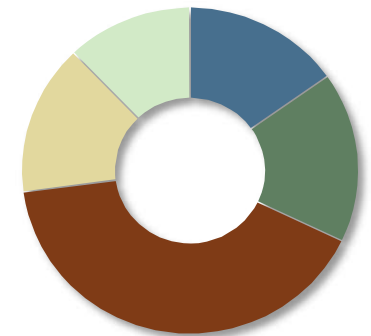
### INVENTORY OF EXISTING NETWORK

A key component in planning for future transportation improvements in a community is to complete an inventory of the existing transportation infrastructure serving the town. Canterbury's transportation network is centered around vehicular travel on a mix of State and locally owned roads and bridges. Bicycle, pedestrian, and rail transportation is minimal, which is typical for a rural town with variable topography.

### STATE HIGHWAY CLASSIFICATION AND FUNDING

The State Aid classification system, which is identified by NH RSA 229:5 and 229:231, establishes responsibility for construction, reconstruction, and maintenance as well as eligibility for use of State Aid funds. This classification system also provides a basic hierarchy of roadways. Canterbury's roads fall into five classes: Class I, Class II, Class V, Class VI and private roads. There is no Class III (recreational) or Class IV (within urban compacts) Highways in Canterbury. The table below displays roadway mileage by classification. Canterbury's highway network is unique in that the local road mileage is almost equal to the State-owned mileage. Winter maintenance on sections of unnumbered Class II State routes in Canterbury is the responsibility of the Town, while summer maintenance is conducted by NHDOT District 3.

- **Class I:** State Aid Highways: (16 miles)
- **Class II:** State Aid Highways: (18 miles)
- **Class V:** Local Roads: (44 miles)
- **Class VI:** Unmaintained Roads: (16 miles)
- **Private Roads:** (13 miles)



Data: NH Department of Transportation

## CLASS I STATE AID PRIMARY HIGHWAYS

Class I Highways are highways on the primary State highway system, excluding portions within the compact sections of cities and towns. The State assumes full control of reconstruction and maintenance of these sections. I-93, NH 106, and US 4 in Canterbury are Class I State Aid Primary highways.

## CLASS II STATE AID SECONDARY HIGHWAYS

Class II highways are State aid secondary highways and secondary highways owned and maintained by municipalities. NH 132, Baptist, Boyce, Center, Kimball Pond, Shaker and West Roads are Class II highways.

## CLASS V LOCAL HIGHWAYS

All traveled highways that a town has the duty to maintain regularly are classified as Class V. The State provides funding to towns for road maintenance on Class V roads in the form of Highway Block Grant Aid. These funds are distributed by the State of New Hampshire on a yearly basis with partial disbursements made four times a year, 30% in July, 30% in October, 20% in January, and 20% in April with unused balances carrying over. The funds come from a portion of the total gas tax and motor vehicle registration fees collected by the State. The funds can be used to fund or match funding for constructing, reconstructing, or maintaining Class V (town maintained) highways. Additionally, equipment for maintaining local roads is eligible for purchase.

## CLASS VI UNMAINTAINED HIGHWAYS

Class VI roads are those that are not maintained by a town and may be subject to gates and bars. A Class V Road can become a Class VI Road if the town has not maintained it for five or more years. Under RSA 674:41, I(c), Town Selectmen upon review and comment from the Planning board may authorize or deny building on any lot with frontage access on a Class VI Road. Canterbury has a Class VI/Private Road Policy in place in which the Board of Selectmen evaluate applications for building permits in consultation with other Town departments based on a

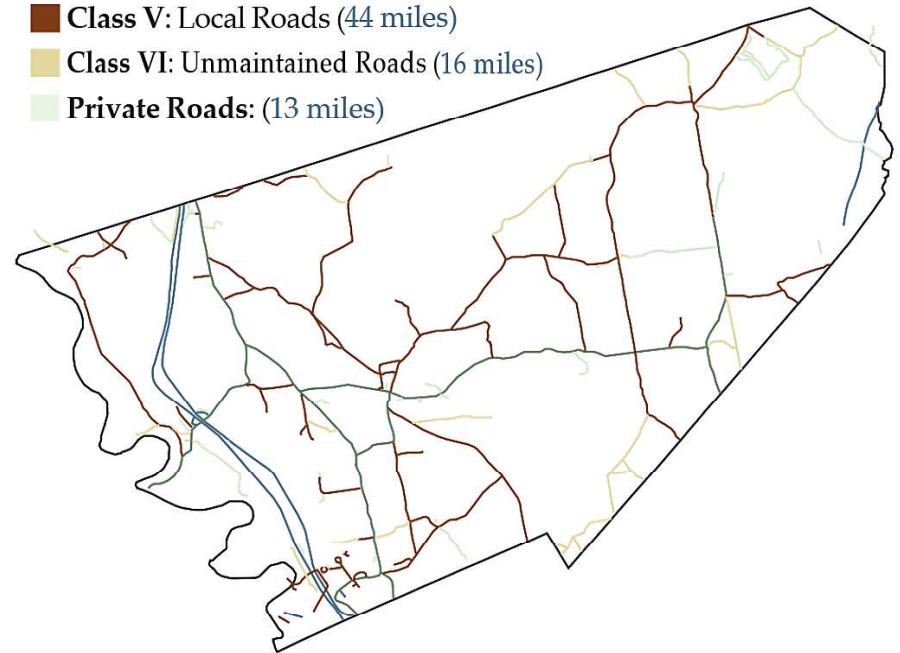
set of criteria including: the condition of the roads; the condition of connecting roads; the effect of development on municipal services; Class VI road-specific permit criteria/compliance; the development's general "fit" in the growth and development patterns of the town and its goals; and if the permit will distort the Town's road map or Plan for Tomorrow.

## PRIVATE ROADS

When compared to towns of similar size, there are a large number of private roads in Canterbury. Private roads are not maintained by the Town or State and have a limited group of people who are authorized to travel.

## State Legislative Classification Road Map

- Class I: State Aid Highways (16 miles)
- Class II: State Aid Highways (18 miles)
- Class V: Local Roads (44 miles)
- Class VI: Unmaintained Roads (16 miles)
- Private Roads: (13 miles)

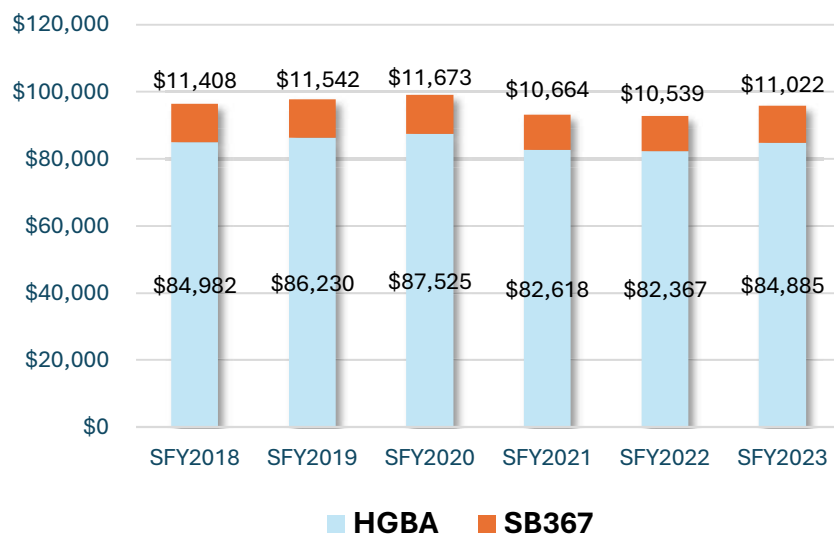


## Block Grant Aid Funding

The funds are allocated from an annual apportionment (State Fiscal Year) of not less than twelve percent (12%) of the total highway revenues collected from the preceding year. Half of that total apportionment is distributed based on population and the other half is distributed based on Class IV and V road mileage. This comes out to approximately \$1,200 for each mile of Class IV and V highway and about \$11 per person.

It is crucial to provide accurate information regarding Class V Road mileage to NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to ensure Canterbury receives its proper allotment. Highway Block Grant Aid (HBGA) distribution formulas do not take into consideration the condition of roads or the traffic on municipal roads. Senate Bill (SB) 367, approved in 2014, raised revenue dedicated to increased highway block grant funding to municipalities, increased municipal bridge aid, resurfacing and reconstruction of secondary roads, and completion of the I-93 expansion, enclosed recycling and transfer station. The garage building houses two refuse trucks.

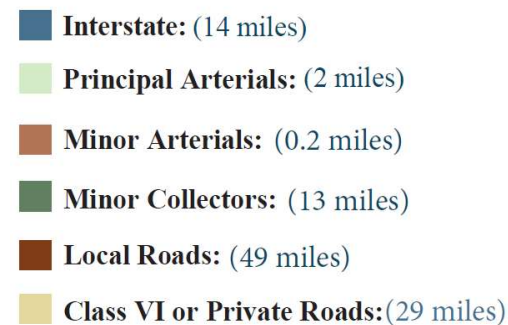
## Highway Block Grant Aid Payment



## FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The functional classification system identifies roads by the type of service provided and by the role of each highway within the State system based on standards developed by the US Department of Transportation. While the State aid classification system outlined above is the primary basis for determining jurisdiction, the following system is important for determining eligibility for federal funds.

## Federal Functional Classification Mileage



Data: New Hampshire Department of Transportation

## PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

These highways are high volume and high-speed routes that form the basic framework of the State roadway system. The primary function of these arterials is to link between major geographic and urban areas in the State. NH 106 is a Principal Arterial and is eligible for Federal Aid.

## MINOR ARTERIALS

These roadways provide service for trips of moderate length, serving geographic areas that are smaller than their higher Arterial counterpart. US 4, which crosses Canterbury, is a minor arterial and is eligible for federal aid.



## MINOR COLLECTORS

These roads are not eligible for federal aid funding and typically provide access to smaller communities than arterial roadways. These collectors often link locally important trip generators to surrounding rural areas. NH 132, Baptist Road, Center Road, West Road, and sections of Shaker Road are minor collectors.

## LOCAL ROADS

These roads and streets are used primarily to provide access to adjacent properties. This includes the vast majority of streets and roads open for public travel in Canterbury.

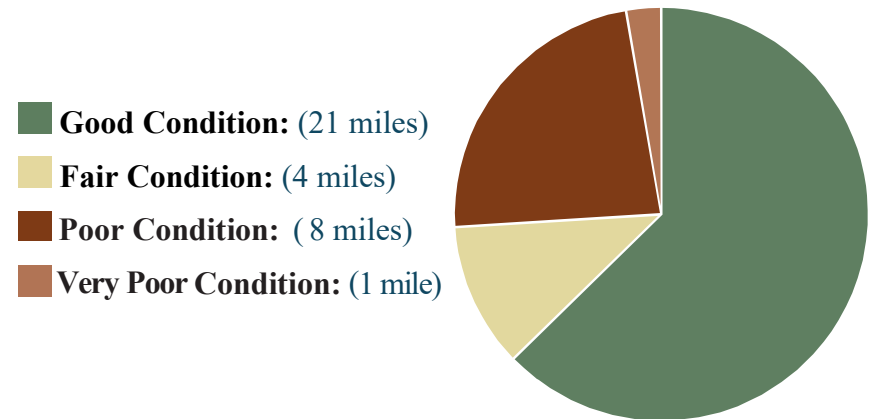
## ROADWAY CONDITIONS

Pavement condition data from 2021 were obtained from the NHDOT's Pavement Management Section for state-maintained (Class I and II) roads. The pavement condition is based on the International Roughness Index (IRI), which is calculated from the average pavement roughness measured in the left and right wheel paths of roadways. The IRI is further categorized into good, fair, poor, and very poor condition. In Canterbury, the number routes including I-93, NH 106, and the southern half of NH 132 are in good condition. Recent work has been completed in Town to improve the quality of some State maintained roads in poor condition.

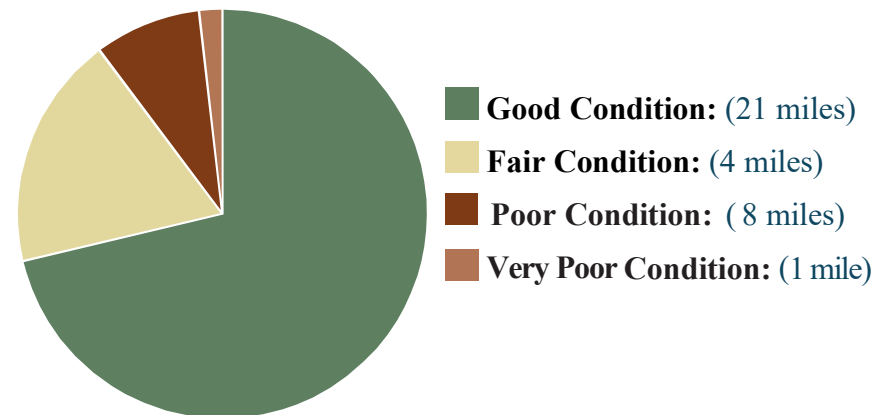
The condition of town-maintained roads was collected through the NH Statewide Asset Data Exchange System (SADES) Road Surface Management System (RSMS) process. The process consisted of driving each segment of the road collecting quantitative and qualitative data regarding the road surface. The condition of these roads is categorized using a similar system to IRI known as the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), which is calculated based on the inputs collected during assessment.

Most Town maintained roads are in good condition, but there are small sections of poor condition scattered throughout town, notably on Shaker Road, and the maintained section of Ayers Road.

### State Maintained Roadway Condition (Based on IRI 2021)



### Town Maintained Roadway Condition (Based on PCI 2022)



## Statewide Asset Data Exchange System (SADES)

SADES establishes an inventory of transportation assets including a maintainable condition assessment process for many State and local agencies. Its unique approach to statewide asset management efficiently utilizes modern technology and joins state, local, and regional efforts for the common goal of developing accurate and sustainable data collection.

In 2015 NHDOT, the University of NH's (UNH) Technology Transfer Center (T2) and all nine of NH's Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) initiated a new Road Surface Management System (RSMS) utilizing SADES. The updated RSMS includes many changes to improve the quality, consistency, and efficiency of data collection and the overall value of the product to better guide municipalities with road maintenance. Canterbury Town Staff are currently updating their road condition database using this software and process. SADES has also developed a separate program for collection of roadside drainage assets known as Closed Culvert and Drainage System (CCDS). It includes collection of inlets, outlets, pipes, and drainage structures. The objective for CCDS is to have universally collected assets based on common standards that are easily accessible.

## Bridge Network

Bridges are the most expensive part of the surface transportation network. NHDOT inspects all of the state's municipal and State owned bridges. Inspections typically occur every two years and the reports are shared with towns. The state manages a database where bridges are scored based on National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). The next page shows bridges in Canterbury as listed on the 2021 NHDOT Bridge Summary. Bridges are scored using Federal Sufficiency Ratings (FSR), a nationally accepted method for evaluating bridges. FSR represents the relative effectiveness of a bridge. NHDOT manages three bridge aid programs, all of which begin by a town applying for a preliminary estimate or hiring an approved consultant to do the estimate. NHDOT determines a potential program and year of funds for construction; this process can take several months.



Source: Nathan Holth; HistoricBridges.Org

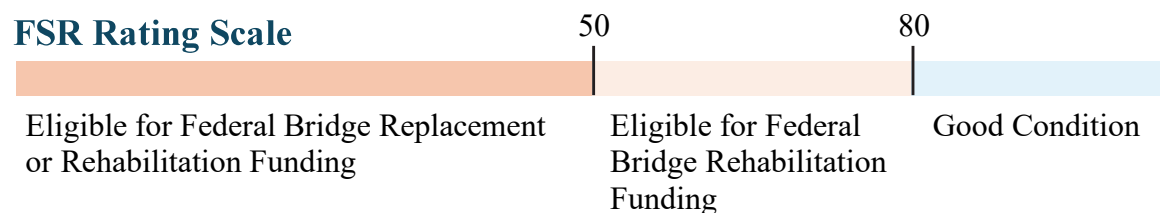
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*The 1907 Canterbury-Boscawen bridge over the Merrimack River linked West Road with Depot Street in Boscawen. The 347 foot long two-span through truss bridge was demolished in 2014 after being closed to traffic in 1965. It was the seventh bridge built in that location, with the first opening in 1803.*



Bridge/Road	Location	FSR	Condition	Owner	*AADT	Inspection Date	Year Built/Rebuilt
Intervale Road	Over Bryant Brook	99.9	N/A	Town	81	Aug 2020	2009
I-93	Over Bryant Brook	80.1	N/A	NHDOT	31,645	Jun 2020	1960
I-93 SB	Over West Road	78	Good	NHDOT	16,461	Jun 2020	1960/1991
I-93 NB	Over West Road	83	Good	NHDOT	16,768	Jun 2020	1960/1991
NH 132	Over Bryant Brook	92.5	Good	NHDOT	853	Jun 2020	1947/1983
Randall Road	Over Bryant Brook	95	Very Good	Town	81	Aug 2020	1930/2017
I-93 SB	Over Cold Brook	96.8	N/A	NHDOT	16,159	Jun 2020	1960
Old Tilton Road	Over Forest Pond Brook	99	Excellent	Town	81	Aug 2020	1950/2012
Clough Tavern Road	Over Forest Pond Brook	55.7	Fair (Red List)	Town	81	Dec 2021	1940/1990
Baptist Road	Over Pickard Brook	87.7	N/A	NHDOT	815	Jun 2020	1961/2002
Clough Pond Road	Over Pickard Brook	98	Excellent	Town	81	Aug 2020	1987/2014
NH 106	Over Gues Meadow Brook	93.8	N/A	NHDOT	7,185	Jun 2020	1928/1992
NH 106	Over Soucook River	98.6	Good	NHDOT	7,185	Jun 2020	1952

### FSR Rating Scale



*Data: New Hampshire Department of Transportation*

\*AADT: Average Annual Daily Trips

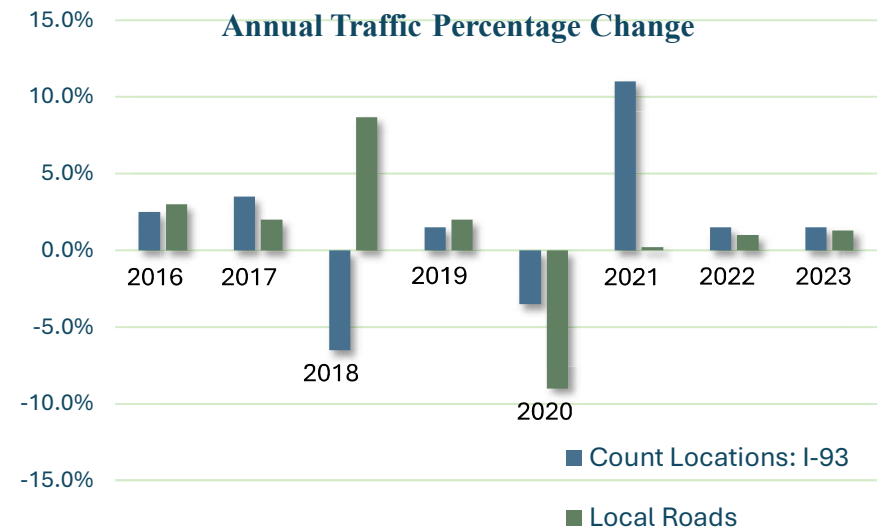
## Traffic Volumes

The Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) maintains an ongoing traffic count program monitoring the region's transportation network. Much of the traffic data collection is done for NHDOT in accordance with federal guidelines for the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). Each year Canterbury has traffic data collected at a variety of sites. Traffic data collection always includes volumes to calculate an average annual daily traffic figure, but in certain cases vehicle classification and speed data are collected.

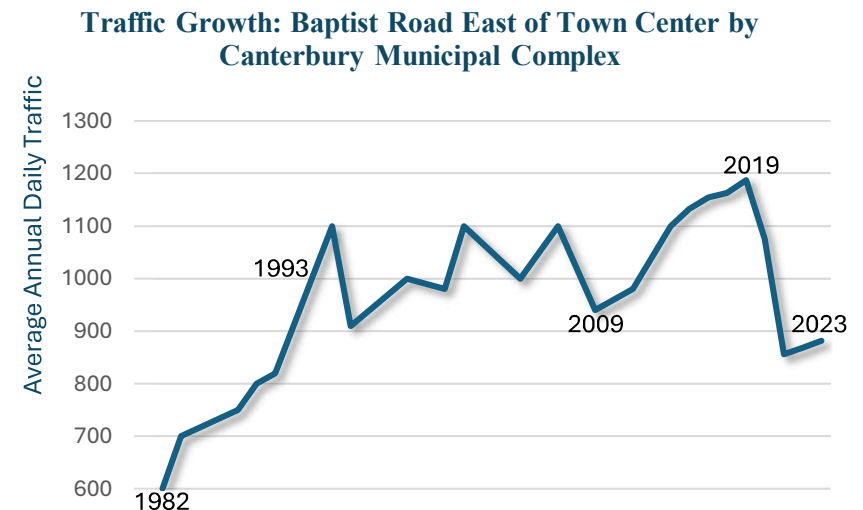
NHDOT uses Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) to measure traffic demand for a roadway. AADT is defined by NHDOT as the total two-way volume of traffic at a given location during a 24-hour period representing an average day of the year. AADT is calculated by applying the raw data with correction factors to account for weekday and seasonal variation in traffic volumes. NHDOT uses permanent traffic counters installed in the roadway to assist with these calculations.

### TRENDS

Five sites on I-93 including Exit 18 ramps and six other locations across Canterbury are regularly monitored as part of the HPMS. The data show variable traffic volumes from 2016 to 2023 with a steep decline in traffic in 2020 before increasing again in 2021. Traffic volumes increased much more significantly at the I-93 sites than at non-interstate locations in 2021. Traffic growth across Canterbury is steadiest on the interstate mainline. The Town's trend is similar to the entire region's growth. Anecdotally, traffic volumes in Town seems to have grown slightly while remaining manageable, but the most notable congestion comes from high amounts of school bus traffic.



*Data for both graphs: New Hampshire Department of Transportation*



## *Motor Vehicle Crashes*

Motor vehicle crash data from 2015 - 2019 was obtained from NHDOT, who receives the data from the Department of Safety for crashes with over \$1,000 in damage. Roughly 20% of crashes are not locatable based on the information contained in the crash reports. Key figures from the data are explored below:

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**313** Total Reported Crashes with a majority occurring on **I-93**.

**26** reported crashes on the 2-mile stretch of **NH 106**, located in Canterbury, including a single fatality. These crashes contributed to the execution and completion of safety improvements in 2021.

The most reported crashes occurred on **West Road**, with **33**.

**NH 132**, a longer stretch of road, had **20** crashes.

**Shaker** and **Baptist Roads**, which have sections managed by both the Town and State, had **19** and **10** crashes respectively, including multiple fatalities on Shaker Road.

The Town-owned roads with the most crashes were **Intervale Road (10)** and **Hackleboro Road (7)**.

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It is reasonable to assume that a number of smaller crashes may also have occurred during this time period that were not reported. All crashes in Canterbury are a cause for concern and should be monitored to determine locations where enforcement or infrastructure improvements may mitigate issues that lead to crashes or reduce the severity of crashes. Techniques such as high friction pavement have been proven to help vehicles stay on the road in slippery conditions on steep and windy sections of roads. Sight distance improvements at intersections may also help reduce intersection related crashes while guardrails can help reduce the severity of crashes. Shaker Road has had high severity crashes and could benefit from added safety measures including guardrails, especially in locations with large undulations such as near New Freedom Academy.

### **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)**

The purpose of NHDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is to achieve a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads through safety implementation projects.

Receiving funding for an HSIP project is dependent on safety data. A location where a project is considered that has a history of crashes resulting in injuries or fatalities would first be examined with a Road Safety Audit. This type of audit is a collaborative approach to review safety issues and make improvement recommendations. CNHRPC assists its towns in applying for HSIP funds and can complete small scale Road Safety Audits.

## Speeding and Rural Traffic Calming

Local roads with less traffic and fewer houses can be conducive to higher speeds as drivers perceive less safety and speed enforcement risk. The topography and condition of the road can have a significant impact on rates of speed on these roads. In Canterbury, Shaker Road is often cited as a location with speed concerns. The road has long, rolling, relatively straight sections that can lead to speeding. Located on this road is the Canterbury Shaker Village, which has a crosswalk and more pedestrians than standard for this type of road, leading to greater potential safety risk.

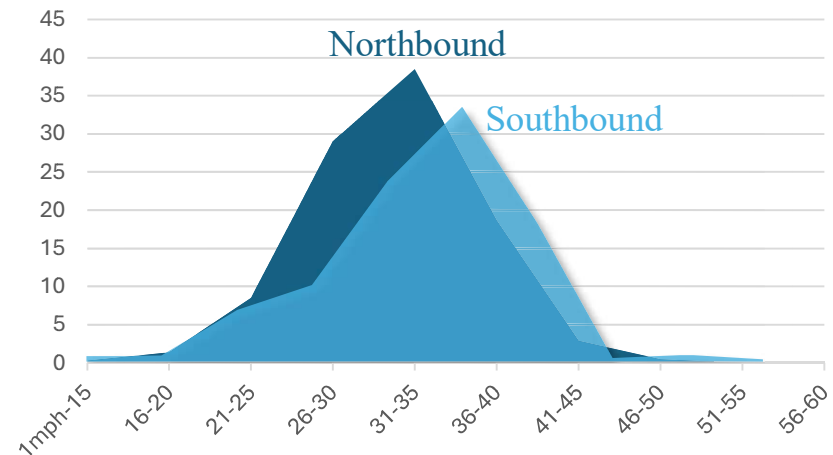
Traffic calming measures work to alter driver behavior to improve safety conditions of a road, usually involving physical changes. Many tactics such as raised intersections, road narrowing, or pavement markings are designed for and most effective in denser residential areas. However, speed feedback signs (SFS), which display drivers with feedback about their speed in relationship to the posted speed limit, are found to be an effective method for reducing speeds at their installed locations. These signs are most effective at reducing the speeds of drivers traveling at rates well above the limit. The ultimate effectiveness is achieved when a strategic location is selected and coupled with enforcement. Speed feedback signs can significantly help to address speeding without road construction.



### Traditional Setup for Speed Limit and Feedback Signs

Some SFS can be customized to flash messages such as “Slow Down” or “Too Fast” based on the speed of the driver. Seeing the direct relationship between speed and the limit tends to affect driver behavior resulting in safer

## Distribution of Car Speed on Shaker Road Recorded South of the Shaker Village



Sidewalks and side paths improve safety for pedestrians by separating them from travel lanes of roadways. Bike lanes are meant to provide adequate space for vehicles to safely pass cyclists, but separated paths offer even greater safety. In more rural areas with lower traffic volumes a wider shoulder can provide adequate space for cyclists. Baptist Road is a location that could benefit from wider shoulders in places and a crosswalk in the Town center to allow school children to cross towards the library.

Sidewalks and pathways can promote recreation and non-motorized travel, while beautifying an area and stimulating economic activity in rural and village settings. Similar to the town’s road network, the sidewalk and bicycle networks in Canterbury should be preserved, enhanced and maintained year-round.

The results of the Community Survey noted strong support for the development of additional hiking and multi-use trails in Canterbury. Steps to move trail planning forward include the formation of a trails committee, coordination with neighboring

communities to develop regional connections, and collaborating with local organizations such as the Canterbury Shaker Village or regional snowmobile clubs.

### CLASS A TRAILS

Many communities have begun to consider Class VI roads as candidates for Class A Trail designation. Reclassification must be selective in targeting certain roadways that have little or no development, are scenic, have no inherent liability concerns, allow public access, and serve to connect large areas of open space, conservation, or agricultural lands. By reclassifying certain roadways that meet these criteria to Class A Trails, the community would take a step towards creating a community-wide system of greenway trails. Towns may undertake maintenance (at their option) on Class A Trails.

Reclassification of Class VI roads to Class A Trails does not inhibit the access rights of landowners along the roadways. Landowners can continue to use the trail for vehicular access for forestry, agriculture, and access to existing buildings. However, under such classification, new building development as well as expansion, enlargement, or increased intensity of use of any existing building or structure is prohibited by New Hampshire Statute.

### SCENIC ROADS AND STONE WALLS

Any road other than Class I or II highways can be designated by the town as a scenic road (RSA 231:157). The Scenic Road designation requires the State or Town to receive written permission of the Planning Board prior to any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving on the road if the work requires damage or removal of trees or stone walls.

If the road in question is located within one of the two Historic Districts the Historic District Committee would be responsible for approving planned changes. If alterations or impacts to stone walls are necessary for a project the NHDOT or Town must compensate the landowner for the impacted wall if it cannot be rebuilt or no other amiable agreement is reached (RSA 231:17).

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) in coordination with the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Inc. (CAPBMCI) operates rural transit services and a volunteer driver program (VDP) that serves the region's elderly and disabled populations. Canterbury residents over 60 or with disabilities are eligible for essential rides through the VDP program at no cost to the rider. The closest intercity transit station is in Concord on Stickney Avenue which provides daily connections to major cities south of Concord. There is a park and ride at Exit 18 with 10 spaces that is regularly used and can be a useful space for facilitating carpooling.

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### CommuteSmart New Hampshire

CommuteSmart New Hampshire (CSNH) is a coalition dedicated to encouraging and assisting people to choose sustainable transportation options in place of driving single occupancy vehicles. Canterbury residents and employers can utilize the CSNH Trip Planner to find transit offerings and carpool matches. Effective Transportation Demand Management programs such as CSNH can help reduce demands on transportation infrastructure, parking, congestion, emissions, and increase access to transportation.

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## *Future Measures*

### *Improving Canterbury's Transportation system*

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Potential enhancements to Canterbury's transportation system include short term planned improvements on US 4 and NH 106 as well as low-cost safety improvements and traffic calming measures.

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#### **Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road Intersection**

- I. In 2013 NHDOT led a road safety audit for this intersection with participation from CNHRPC, Canterbury's Select Board, Planning Board, Highway Department and Conservation Commission. The conference report from the Road Safety Audit noted many concerns ranging from sight distances and maintenance issues to the severe skew of the roadway. It was determined that using HSIP funds to improve the intersection would not be justified because of the low number and severity of crashes. Higher taxes on undeveloped land could force the sale of this land.
- II. A speed study was conducted on Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road in the vicinity of the intersection in 2019. The study showed over 25% of vehicles traveling above the 35mph speed limit. The 85th percentile in a speed study is defined as "the speed at or below which 85% of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a monitored point" and is often used as a guide when setting speed limits. In this study the 85th percentiles were 36-mph in the southbound direction and 38-mph northbound towards the center of town. These observed speeds combined with the site distance issues and traffic volumes are cause for concern. Lowering the speed limit to 30 by extending the village zone speed limit down Kimball Pond Road, combined with enforcement, could help alleviate safety concerns.
- III. Sight distance and intersection alignment issues are mostly a result of the topography. As a result, realignment or installation of guardrails could be costly. In 2019 some trees were removed and a mirror installed, which improved sight lines significantly. High friction pavement, which naturally slows vehicles down and can assist stopping even in adverse weather conditions, could be installed to assist drivers on Morrill Road more safely approach the intersection.

#### **US 4 (Hoit Road), Old Boyce Road, and Whitney Road Intersection**

- I. Although this intersection is not located in Canterbury, the Canterbury Town line is a short distance away. Commercial development on Whitney Road in Concord triggered the reconstruction of this intersection to include a two-lane roundabout at Whitney and Old Boyce Roads and the reconfiguration of the Exit 17 southbound onramp to I-93. Most of Canterbury's commercial and industrial land is located nearby, with additional vacant land available to be developed. Canterbury should continue to play a role in the development of this intersection.



## NH Route 106 Widening

- I. In the early 1990s, the NH 106 corridor between the cities of Concord and Laconia was studied, culminating in a final report in 1995. The goal of the initial report was to develop an alternative corridor to Interstate I-93. In 2012, NHDOT completed a corridor study along NH 106 from I-393 in Concord to just north of Ames Road in Canterbury which refined the recommendations from the 1995 Environmental Assessment. As an outcome of that study a project to widen 3.6 miles of NH 106 from Soucook Road in Loudon to Ames Road in Canterbury was included in the State Ten-Year Plan, and construction was completed in 2021. Further improvements to the NH 106 corridor in Loudon are currently scheduled for 2026-27.





# *Objectives and Recommendations*

## *Objective One*

Preserve and maintain the existing conditions of the transportation system.

- 1 Regularly monitor data on existing roads, sidewalks, and paths including surface conditions and drainage.
- 2 Promote and support the existing services offered to Canterbury residents by the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Inc. and CommuteSmart NH.
- 3 Review NHDOT bridge inspection reports regularly to monitor bridge conditions and ensure that municipal bridges are maintained, repaired and/or replaced when needed.
- 4 Continue to implement asset management strategies including those related to road surface condition and culvert and closed drainage systems.

## *Objective Two*

Address capital improvement projects and studies strategically important to Canterbury's transportation network.

- 1 Monitor and participate in project planning activities related to the NH 106 widening and the US 4 (Hoit Road), Old Boyce Road and Whitney Road Intersection Improvement projects to ensure a positive impact on Canterbury.
- 2 Utilize available traffic count data to evaluate highways and roads that may be adversely impacted by future development trends
- 3 Collaborate with adjacent communities and NHDOT to address maintenance and safety concerns on state-owned roads.
- 4 Work with State and regional agencies and area towns to ensure that transportation projects that are eligible for Federal-Aid funding are adequately represented in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and considered for inclusion in the State Ten-Year Plan.
- 5 Proactively develop additional hiking and multi-use trails in Canterbury. Consider the formation of a Trails Committee to support the effort.

## *Objective Three*

Prioritize safety for all modes of transportation.

- 1 Review crash data on an annual basis and work with CNHRPC and NHDOT to identify enhancements that could be made to improve safety.

- 2 Continue to monitor safety issues in the vicinity of the Kimball Pond Road and Morrill Road intersection.
- 3 Explore options to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety such as construction of sidewalks and widening shoulders as appropriate.
- 4 Consider applying to the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) when addressing safety concerns.



# 6 Housing

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**Overview:**

The character of housing in a community is a reflection of its stability and prosperity and it is a good indicator of the overall quality of life.

For the most part, residents love Canterbury just the way it is. Its agricultural heritage is proudly displayed not just at Shaker Village, but throughout the countryside in town, with its many picturesque, historic farms. The community survey did suggest a growing unease with demographic trends and a concern about the availability and affordability of housing in town, especially for seniors and young families. The ideal vision for future housing in Canterbury, as relayed by residents, is described in this chapter. Various local and regional housing trends are explored that could significantly impact that vision and Canterbury's future. The town's current framework regulating housing construction is analyzed and from that analysis, a series of recommendations have been made.

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**Elements:**

- Overview of Canterbury's Housing Market
- Discussion of Policies and Ordinances
- Analysis and Recommendations

## *From the Community Survey*

"Opportunities for people who live here to work here"

"Welcoming of new families"

"Cluster development for workforce housing"

"More in-law apartments for multi-generation habitation"

"Senior housing options are absent"

"Family-friendly, not overdeveloped"

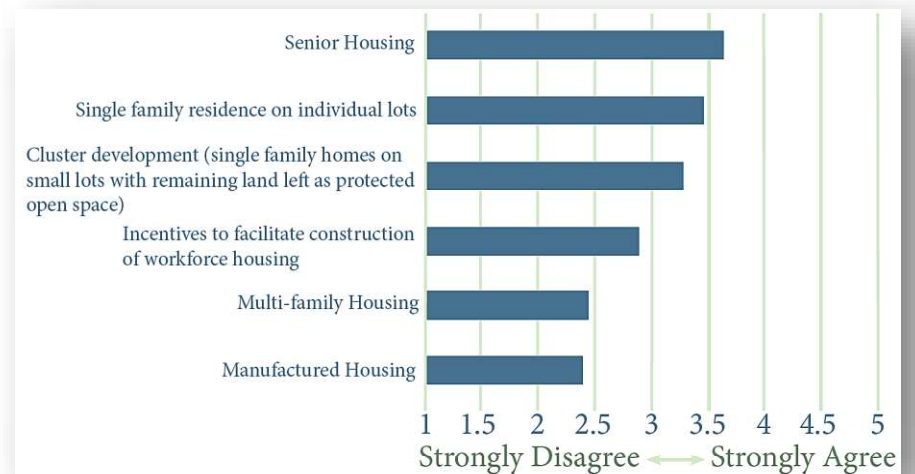
"More density near I-93"

## *The Town's Thoughts*

Input received through the Community Survey indicated residents' appreciation of the Town's rural character and small-town feel, which includes a desire for housing that balances the needs of residents while preserving and protecting Canterbury's current landscape. Overall, there was strong support for housing that could help keep Canterbury accessible to all ages and incomes, including downsizing seniors wishing to remain in Canterbury as well as attracting young families and those in the workforce.

Respondents were most supportive of senior housing, single family residences on individual lots, and cluster developments that include protected open space.

### **How could Canterbury encourage the construction of workforce housing?**





## Impacts of Housing

Affordable, comfortable, safe housing is a basic need for all residents with different income levels, including seniors and young families. An adequate supply of housing for current and future residents is essential to sustain a community. Otherwise, school enrollment will decline, employees for local businesses will be scarce, and volunteers needed for civic life will be absent.

In addition to simply addressing a basic need, changes to local housing policy can have far-reaching impacts. They can determine the pace of economic development, improve access to jobs, education, and healthcare, and help to conserve natural resources, to name a few. Current trends, like the ones described in this chapter, do not necessarily predict the future. Rather, they can show the way for a new course.

### Key Findings

Canterbury is similar to other rural towns in the state of New Hampshire, but it does differ from surrounding towns in a number of respects. The following are some key findings regarding Canterbury's housing challenges:

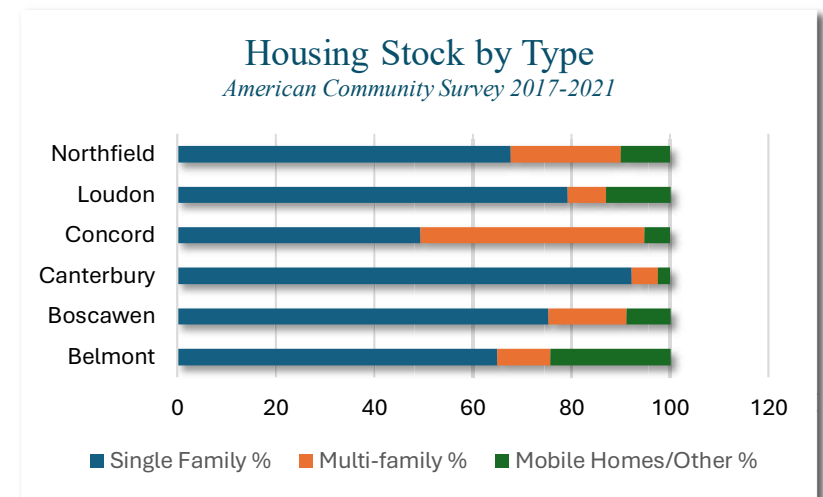
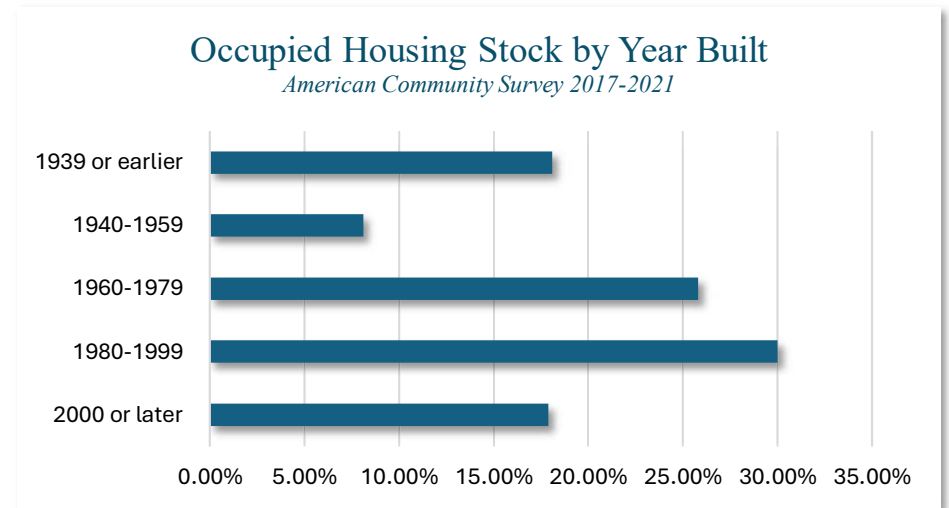
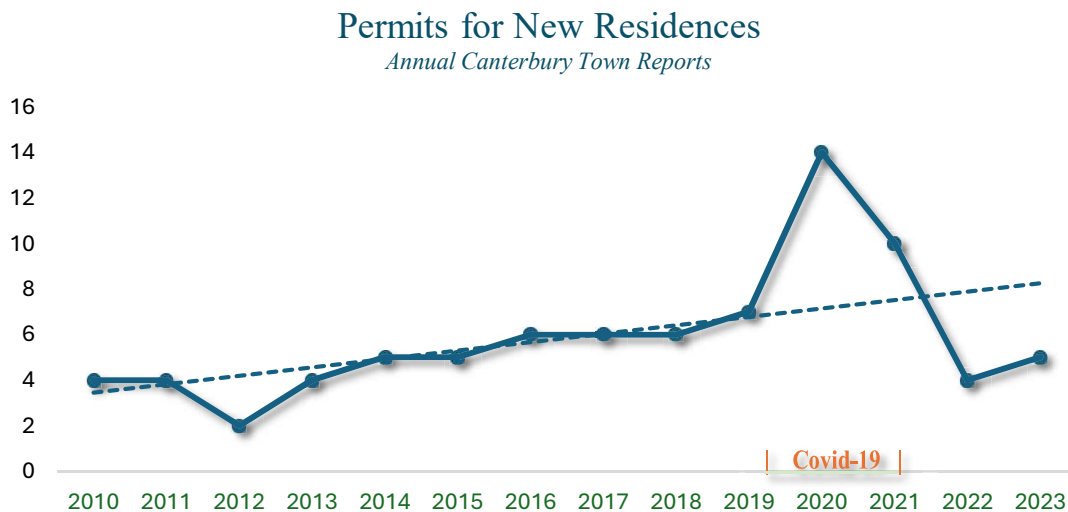
- Canterbury has one of the highest proportions of owner-occupied, single-family homes in the region. While this does add to its strong sense of community spirit, the lack of affordable options limits the availability of housing for young families and seniors who are looking to downsize.
- When compared to surrounding towns, Canterbury has the highest median home value by far. This reflects the desirability of the town for prospective residents.
- Similar to statewide trends, Canterbury's population is growing older. There will continue to be need for a variety of housing to attract younger people, as well as to address the needs of seniors who would like to downsize but still remain residents of the Town.
- Comments from residents from the Community Survey and at the visioning sessions suggest that there is a growing awareness and acceptance of a need for increased housing diversity in Town.
- Accessory Dwelling Units can have an important role in providing flexible and affordable housing options in Canterbury. ADUs are permitted as an accessory use to a business, as well as by special exception anywhere a single-family dwelling is permitted.
- Canterbury's Workforce Housing Ordinance provides structure for addressing the Town's housing needs, but it may be updated to increase efficacy in achieving stated goals.
- Cluster subdivisions can also be used to address housing affordability, as well as conserve/preserve space. Current Town regulations may be revised to provide incentives and encourage its use.

## Housing Trends

Similar to population, the number of housing units has grown substantially in Canterbury in the last forty years. Shown in the first figure, nearly half of the town's housing stock has been built since 1980, with approximately three quarters of the homes built since 1960. Almost all of these have been single-family homes with multiple bedrooms.

Looking specifically at recent annual data for the years between 2010 and 2021, 71 residential building permits were issued, with a recent peak in 2020 with 14 permits. It should be noted that this information in the second figure represents a net gain and considers any demolition permits that were approved over the same time period.

The second figure to the right shows the units by type in Canterbury and adjoining communities. Canterbury has the highest proportion of single-family homes by a significant margin, and the lowest for multi-family units and mobile homes. As reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, the majority of homes in Canterbury (62.9%) have two or three bedrooms, while 30.3% have four or more.





## Housing Trends (continued)

### Canterbury Housing Occupancy | Owner and Renter

Community	% Owner-Occupied	Average Household Size (Owner-Occupied)	% Renter-Occupied	Average Household Size (Renter-Occupied)
Belmont	85.0	2.46	15.0	2.12
Boscawen	81.3	2.80	18.7	1.44
<b>Canterbury</b>	92.9	2.48	7.1	2.00
Concord	55.9	2.56	44.1	1.98
Loudon	88.2	2.51	11.8	1.68
Northfield	75.4	2.73	24.6	2.10

American Community Survey 2017-2021

### Median Home Values

Community	Median Value
Belmont	\$199,800
Boscawen	\$223,000
<b>Canterbury</b>	<b>\$297,000</b>
Concord	\$245,800
Loudon	\$247,100
Northfield	\$196,300

American Community Survey 2017-2021

The table on the left documents housing occupancy characteristics for both owner and renter occupied units in Canterbury and adjoining communities. The majority of occupied units are by owners in Canterbury and all abutting communities, though some communities have higher percentages than others. Canterbury has a significantly higher proportion of owner-occupied residences than surrounding towns. As shown, approximately 93% of Canterbury's occupied units are by the owner, leaving 7% as renter occupied. Average household sizes are much smaller for renter-occupied units and the average size of households in Canterbury is similar to those in many surrounding communities.

According to 2017-2021 American Community Survey data, Canterbury's median home value of \$297,100 is much higher than all surrounding towns, as shown in the table on the right. High home values are certainly a reflection of Canterbury's high household income levels, when compared to its neighbors. A limited supply has an impact on home values as well. Canterbury has a smaller number of housing units than all abutting communities.

## Demographic Demands & Current Housing Supply

There are several demographic indicators that impact housing needs. The average age of a community's population has an important effect on the type of housing desired by residents. Individuals or couples sometimes look for smaller residential units, while young families may require larger, but affordable single-family homes. Seniors often plan to downsize and need housing with features such as single floor living, smaller living space, and lower costs. Another important statistic is average household size. A reduction in household size might suggest a decrease in the number of children, while an increase could suggest an increasing birth rate or that adults are choosing to live together. Data Specific to Canterbury is explored further below and helps to illuminate demographic trends and their potential ramifications.

As with much of New Hampshire, the median age in Canterbury has continued to increase. US Census data in 2000 indicated a median age of 42.4 years. By 2010, that figure had risen to 44.2 years. The most recent decennial census in 2020 indicated that the median age in Canterbury was 47.4. As shown in the table on the right, residents over the age of 45 make up the largest proportion by far in towns in the region, including Canterbury.

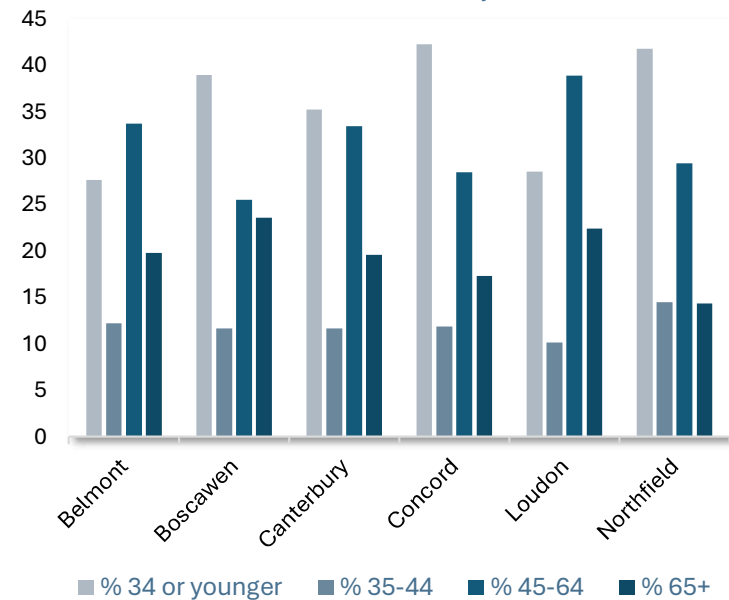
As the median age has increased, the average household size of residences in Canterbury has declined. According to the American Community Survey 2009-2013, the average household size of owner-occupied units in Canterbury was 2.65. That figure had declined to 2.48 in the most recent American Community Survey of 2017-2021.

When compared to surrounding towns, Canterbury is in the middle range of average household age. Belmont and Loudon had a higher percentage of residents over the age of 45, while Boscawen, Concord, and Northfield had a lower percentage. According to the American Community Survey from ten years before, less than half of Canterbury's population was under the age of 45; today that figure is 53.1%.

Changes in demographics can alter the need for municipal services, as well as demand for certain types of housing. This has become particularly evident when examining school enrollment trends for many New Hampshire towns.

### Age of Housholders

*American Consumer Survey 2017-2021*



## Fair Share Analysis

What is a “Fair Share Analysis?” At its most basic level, the Fair Share Analysis is a set of statistics that help illustrate housing needs projected to 2040. Such an analysis is part of the “Regional Housing Needs Assessment” which regional planning commissions are required to develop every 5 years according to state law, RSA 36:47.II:

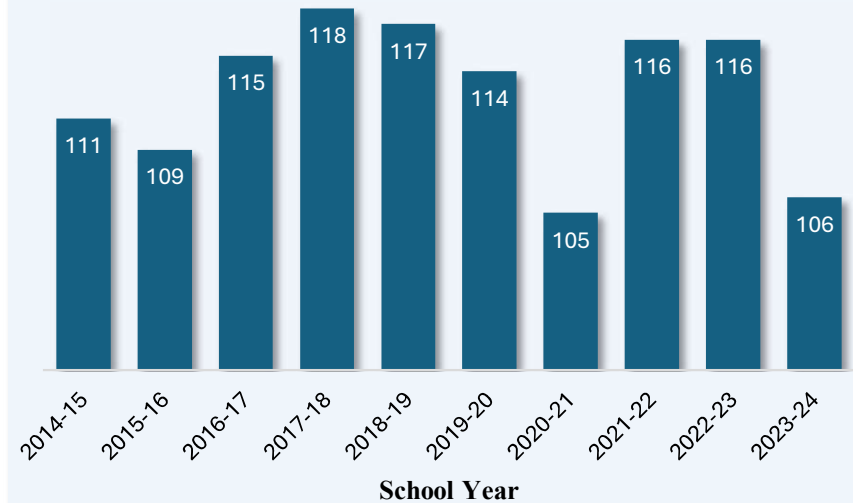
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*“For the purpose of assisting municipalities in complying with RSA 674:2, III(m), each regional planning commission shall compile a regional housing needs assessment, which shall include an assessment of the regional need for housing for persons and families of all levels of income. This regional housing need assessment shall be updated every 5 years and made available to all municipalities in the planning region.”*

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The Fair Share Analysis considers the existing housing, and population trends and estimates how many units will be needed in the future based on population projections. It considers rental and owner-occupied units and affordability. The owner/renter splits are determined by looking at current US Census ACS data and projecting it in the future. NH RSA 674:58(IV) uses area median income (AMI) to define affordability. The analysis of the data is presented both in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and at the local level in municipal Master Plans.

Canterbury Elementary School Enrollment



The Canterbury Elementary School was originally constructed in the 1950s. A major addition was completed in 1991, and the school had an enrollment of over 140 students in 2006. In the early 2000s enrollment was at an all-time high, but in recent years it has declined, as shown below. Over the past eight years, school enrollment has decreased by almost 11% despite the one-year increase in 2022-23. It should be noted that in the Community Survey, respondents by a large margin strongly agreed with the statement that “it is important that Canterbury continues to have its own elementary school.”

## ***Fair Share Analysis (continued)***

For Canterbury, the Fair Share Analysis identifies that **a total of 178 housing units would be needed by 2040**; this would break down to about **9 new units per year**. The cumulative number of units, broken down by affordability, that are estimated to be needed by 2040 are shown in the table below.

Owner Occupied Units			Renter Occupied Units			2020-2040
Below 100% AMI	Above 100% AMI	Total owner Occupied	Below 60% AMI	Above 60% AMI	Total Renter Occupied	Total Fair Share Target
34	84	118	19	41	60	180

It is important to note that, while the assessment is essentially an estimate of needed housing, it is not a mandate to build such units. Analysis is merely a tool to describe future housing needs. Lastly, there is no penalty if the Town is unable to meet the housing unit target goals as described in the analysis.

## Zoning Framework

Canterbury has eight zoning districts: Agriculture/Conservation (A), Rural (RU), Residential (R), Commercial (C), Industrial (I), Natural Resource (NR), Center Historic (CHD), and Shaker Village Museum Preservation (SVMPD). Almost half of the total land area in town is zoned Agriculture/Conservation. Single family detached dwellings are permitted in the five residential districts by right and one district by special exception. Single family detached dwellings are not permitted in the Commercial and Industrial Zone Districts.

Two family dwellings are permitted by right in the RU and R Districts, and by special exception in the NR, CHD, and SVMPD zoning designations; they are not permitted in other districts. Multi-family dwellings are permitted by special exception in the RU and R Districts.

### *Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)*

ADUs can help increase the supply of affordable housing in a community without the need for subdivision or additional infrastructure. They can offer flexible housing options for seniors to stay in their homes and age in place, as they call for multi-generational living. ADU are also a tool that allows the creation of new housing without changing the character of a neighborhood.

Article 18 of the Canterbury Zoning Ordinance regulates ADUs. They are allowed by special exception in all districts that permit single-family residences. An ADU that is accessory to a business is also allowed in the Commercial Zone District. Restrictions include a maximum of one ADU per lot with no more than 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. Either the primary unit or the ADU must be owner-occupied. Both attached and detached ADUs are allowed with some limitations.

## *Cluster Residential Development*

The clustering of houses, such as in Canterbury Center and Shaker Village, is a common historical settlement pattern. Modern zoning often aspires to re-create this pattern with cluster development regulations. Such rules usually reduce minimum dimensional standards for new lots, which in turn reduces the overall development footprint. It is a tool used to preserve open space and farmland, while limiting the need for new infrastructure which can help to lower housing costs.

The requirements for residential cluster subdivisions are found in Article 6 of the Canterbury Zoning Ordinance. They are permitted for single-family homes as a use by right in the RU, R, CHD, and SVMPD Zone Districts, but are not permitted at all in other zone districts. Cluster developments with multi-family buildings are permitted by special exception in the RU and R Zone Districts. A reduction in lot size to 1 acre, and in road frontage to 100 feet are allowed, but no increase to the density of the underlying zone district is permitted. Sizable buffers of 200 feet on the front and 50 feet on the perimeter are also required.

### **DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS**

The minimum lot standards found in Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance are tabulated below:

<b>District</b>	<b>Minimum Size (acres)</b>	<b>Minimum Depth (ft)</b>	<b>Minimum Width (ft)</b>
Ag. /Conservation:	5	300	300
Rural:	3	250	300
Residential:	2	200	300
Commercial:	1	150	200
Industrial:	2	150	200
Center Historic:	2	200	300
Natural Resource:	10	300	300
Shaker Village:	<i>See art. 5.4</i>	<i>See art. 5.4</i>	<i>See art. 5.4</i>



## *Zoning Framework (continued)*

A minimum front setback of 50 feet is required for all lots and all residential properties must have 300 feet of road frontage. Minimum dimensional standards such as these do not match what has been built in Canterbury's historic villages. Excessive minimum standards may also add to the overall cost of housing in a community.

### *Growth Management*

Residential building permits are limited annually under Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance to no more than 3% of the total year-round dwelling units in town. For multi-family dwellings, only one permit may be issued annually with no more than 1% of the total year-round dwelling units to be built in any given year. This ordinance is in effect until 2025, and the Planning Board is required to review growth rates every two years. The threshold for permits has not been reached in recent years.

### *Impact Fees*

Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance authorizes the Planning Board to assess *impact fees*. An *impact fee* refers to a monetary assessment imposed upon development, including subdivision, building construction or other land-use change, in order to help meet the needs occasioned by the development for the construction or improvement of capital facilities owned or operated by the municipality, including and limited to water treatment and distribution facilities; wastewater treatment and disposal facilities; sanitary sewers; storm water, drainage and flood control facilities; public road systems and rights-of-way; municipal office facilities; public school facilities; the municipality's proportional share of capital facilities of a cooperative or regional school district of which the municipality is a member; public safety facilities; solid waste collection, transfer, recycling, processing and disposal facilities; public libraries; and public recreation facilities, not including public open space. The amount of any impact fee must be a

proportional share of a capital cost that is reasonably related to the capital needs created by the development, and funds must be used within six years or returned to the developer with accrued interest. Canterbury has no current impact fee assessments.

### *Manufactured Housing*

New manufactured homes are prohibited in all zone districts, but Manufactured Housing Parks are permitted in the RU and R Zone Districts under Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance. Manufactured Home Parks require site plan approval from the Planning Board and a permit from the Board of Selectmen. Lot sizes may be reduced to a half-acre, but the same density is required as that in the underlying zone district.

### *Workforce Housing*

Workforce Housing regulations have been adopted by many communities in response to a state law that requires municipalities to provide a "reasonable and realistic" opportunity for housing to be developed that is affordable. Many of these ordinances have fallen far short and have failed to generate many new affordable housing units.

Canterbury adopted Article 16 of its Zoning Ordinance to address the State law. It is tied to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and it is only in effect if it is determined that the Town is not meeting its regional fair share of workforce housing. A conditional use permit is required, and the process is complicated and cumbersome, without a predictable outcome. To date, no projects have been approved under this ordinance.

## Objectives and Recommendations

*This chapter has focused on the Town's current housing inventory and zoning framework and has described the needs generated from changing demographics. There are many opportunities available to enhance and diversify Canterbury's housing inventory while preserving the character of the Town and quality of life that is so highly valued by residents.*

*The following objectives and recommendations were developed to address the housing needs for Canterbury's current and prospective residents and to alter current demographic trends:*

### Objective One

Support a mix of housing densities and types in Canterbury.

- 1 Consider the development of mixed-use zones in the vicinity of Exits 17 and 18 to accommodate a mix of housing and small-scale retail/office uses.

### Objective Two

Promote the use of cluster subdivisions and other zoning tools to increase the availability of housing.

- 1 Update the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to meet the goals, policies, and objectives described in the Plan for Tomorrow by utilizing but not being limited to the Innovative Land Use Controls granted by New Hampshire law to the Towns under RSA 674:16.II and the methods contained in RSA 674:21.
- 2 Update the Workforce Housing Ordinance to simplify and better promote Workforce Housing at an appropriate scale.
- 3 Encourage the use of the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance by simplifying the ordinance and the consideration of a range of density incentives.

### Objective Three

Encourage the development of additional residential units that are smaller and more affordable to accommodate downsizing seniors and young families.

- 1 Revise the Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations as necessary to support accessory apartments, elderly housing, and bed and breakfasts.
- 2 Continue to periodically reevaluate the existing *building permit cap* and adjust a rate of growth that will enable Canterbury to assume its regional responsibilities while not unduly straining existing and planned Town services, schools, and roads. The growth rate should not lead to an adverse impact on the quality of life in Canterbury; to include unreasonable increases in property taxes.

# 7 Community Facilities

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**Overview:** Providing and maintaining the essential services of community and recreational facilities are jointly one of the primary functions of government.

As the population and the demographics of the community grow and change over time, it is important for the community to adjust its delivery of services to meet the needs of the changing population. The following pages will evaluate Canterbury's community facilities, recreational facilities, and utilities.

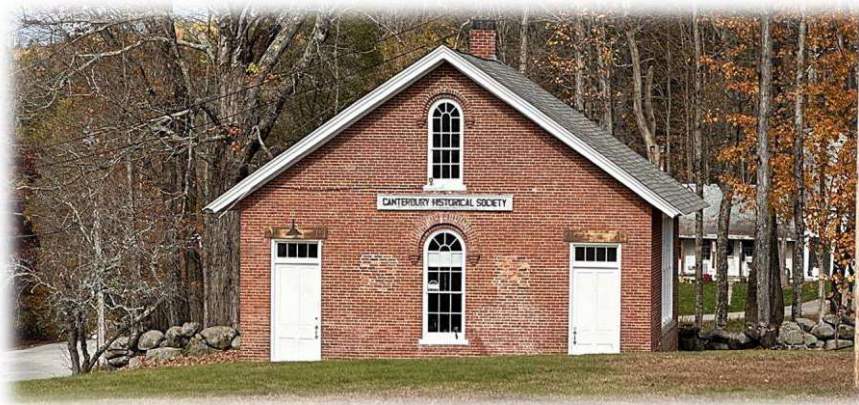
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- Elements:**
- Discussion of Community and Recreational Facilities and Utilities
  - Overview of Short-Term and Long-Term Goals
  - Summary of Future Facility Needs

## *An Overview of Facilities*

The Community Facilities Chapter is organized into evaluations of Canterbury's Departments and Town services, with special discussions included of the School District, public utilities, and recreational opportunities and conservation lands, and describes the status and needs of Canterbury's facilities as of the time of the publication of the Plan for Tomorrow update. The 2020 Community Survey and 2022 Visioning Session reflect residents' perspectives on these critical components of the Town's infrastructure and programs. Some of the survey results included short-term and long-term needs and goals. Suggestions for future improvements of the Town's community facilities can also be found in Canterbury's 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

One tool the Town can use to help manage its community facilities is the preparation and update of an annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP), as part of the municipality's financial planning and budgeting process. This CIP is central to the chapter's Overall Key Findings which presents a list of recommended long-term actions relative to community facilities, recreational facilities, and utilities. The location of the Town's community and recreational facilities are provided on maps to accompany this chapter.



## *Town Character*

The Town of Canterbury is a mix of natural and agricultural landscapes co-existing with the villages and residences throughout Town. The Town has a strong sense of community described as the sense of “knowing” people, hosting community events, school sports, and supporting the arts. Shaker Village, the Elkins Public Library, the Town store, the farmers market and the Canterbury Fair play roles in defining the community's character.

Canterbury loves its rural and historic character, its sense of community, and it is known as a great place to raise children. There is a vibrant sense of “village” in the Town center, and having a village helps people of all ages get to know one another. A demonstration of shared community spirit is the Canterbury Community Newsletter, published monthly for the community by the Canterbury United Community Church to inform residents about local happenings with downloadable back issues available on the Town's website. There is also a town- wide weekly email that is sent out by the library.

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### **Vision Statement**

*The strength and efficiency of each service provided to Canterbury is paramount to the community's well-being.*

*Maintaining a high level of service by the Town's community facilities plays an important role in Canterbury residents' lives. Continuing to communicate between departments, evaluating the capacity to provide essential services, and proper planning will strengthen Canterbury's community character.*

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## *The Town's Thoughts*

Those responding to the Community Survey were given the opportunity to provide their priorities regarding investments in community services. Road maintenance was the highest priority, followed by fire protection and recycling. Of least concern was expanding the Town office and library hours. Overall, concerns related to the tax rate were also expressed throughout the Survey.

A common theme throughout the 2020 Community Survey was the strong appreciation for the array of natural recreation opportunities in Canterbury and how they are directly connected to respondents' high quality of life in Town. When asked about their favorite natural area, respondents most unanimously cited Shaker Village and its trails, Morrill Pond, and the Merrimack River. Following the trend of respondents' favorite locations, hiking trails and waterfront leisure were found to be the most desirable forms of outdoor recreation. This was further indicated through rankings of facilities which the Town should provide in the future. Results favored additional signed and maintained trails followed by waterfront recreation such as an enhanced Town beach and a Merrimack River boat launch. There was an overwhelming desire for connection to a rail trail or multi-use trails network, with supported trail activities for hiking, cross country skiing/snowshoeing, and mountain biking.

The 2020 Community Survey also indicated about 76% of respondents currently have adequate broadband internet service for their needs and about 56% of respondents had adequate cell phone coverage. While preserving Canterbury's rural landscape remains the Town's highest priority, it is also understood that full broadband internet and cell coverage are critical for Town services to operate effectively, and also needed to serve home-based businesses or new businesses looking to relocate to Canterbury. The current level of cellular and broadband service does not fit the existing residential needs, and inadequate coverage would discourage new residents from moving to Canterbury.

## *From the Community*

The June 2022 Visioning Session addressed community facilities, broadband internet, energy and recreational opportunities. Overall, the majority of residents appeared mostly satisfied with the Town's services and infrastructure regarding community facilities and utilities with the need for improvement focused on better access to broadband and cellular connectivity. Solar panel energy on community buildings is generally supported as well as the small-scale solar installations at residences and businesses. Canterbury would like to consider community power as an option and have residents and businesses make their own vendor decisions. The desirability of trails for both recreation and getting around the village were discussed, as were the benefits a trails committee or trail-related groups can bring.





## ***Municipal Building***

The Municipal Safety Complex building at 26 Baptist Road is the Town's command center in time of area emergencies and provides for inside storage of all Town equipment and vehicles. It is also the facility where various Department training courses are held. The Municipal Building houses the Fire & Rescue Department, Police Department, Emergency Management services, and the Highway Department.

### ***Municipal Building Short Term Needs***

The Town anticipates a need for better audio-visual equipment, communications, technology, computer, software, telephone lines, new internet, and furniture for future Emergency Operation Commands that are held in the Safety Complex Building. Security cameras need to be added in the Municipal Building for both employee and visitor safety.

### ***Highway Department Staffing & Equipment***

The Canterbury Highway Department operates out of the shared Municipal Safety Complex and has the responsibility for the maintenance and rehabilitation of over 85 miles of Town roads. The Department also conducts storm and tree cleanup, maintains culverts, fixes washouts, conducts snow removal, manages paving projects, and conducts gravel road grading. The Highway Department website is:

[www.canterburynh.gov/departments/highway/](http://www.canterburynh.gov/departments/highway/).

Canterbury has one full-time road agent appointed by the selectman, four full-time employees and one part-time employee. One position is also assigned to take care of transfer station duties. Concerns regarding recruitment and retaining Highway Department staff have been ongoing. The Highway Department has responsibility for 12 vehicles and major equipment items, including two road graders, a multi-purpose dump/snowplow truck, a refuse packer truck, backhoe, a pickup truck with plow, a Farmall tractor, a utility trailer, and a front loader.

Per capita, Canterbury spends more on Highway Department costs than neighboring communities. This higher cost is due to many factors, including the number of road miles the Town needs to maintain especially during the stormy winter season, road repairs during the muddy spring season and flooded conditions, culvert upgrades, and the original condition of the roads will influence upgrade cost. Repaving is a high priority for the Highway Department.

### ***Highway Department Short Term Needs***

Maintaining a fully staffed Highway Department is a leading short-term need. The Highway Department would like to obtain a GPS unit to find the culvert locations more easily during storms and have radios to enhance communications with other Departments during response operations. This is another challenge of Canterbury not having cell service throughout the Town. In anticipation of the next four years, \$132,000 was deposited in the capital reserves for highway equipment in 2023. This was allocated as follows: \$30,000 for a highway truck, \$30,000 for a highway grader, \$12,000 for a rescue truck, \$30,000 for a highway loader and \$30,000 for a highway backhoe. These amounts are identical to what the Town deposited in 2022. The Town also anticipates a need for a zero-turn mower.

### ***Highway Department Long-Term Needs***

In addition to planning for capital equipment purchases, as time permits, the Highway Department plans to periodically review various policies and procedures, such as their snow plowing agreement with Northfield as well as downed tree and limb reporting to utility companies. They also plan to map the locations of all Town-owned culverts for more efficient cleanout and maintenance.

## *Volunteer Fire, Rescue Staffing & Equipment*

The Canterbury Fire & Rescue Department headquartered at the Municipal Building consists of 24 volunteer members fulfilling various roles. A part-time Fire Chief also serves as the Emergency Management Director, and a full-time Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) are employed by the Town. The volunteer fire fighters and EMTs are provided with financial assistance to maintain their certifications. The Canterbury Fire Department is constantly recruiting to attract more volunteers. For equipment, the Department has three pumpers/tankers, two forestry vehicles and two rescue vehicles. The Fire & Rescue Department has a Facebook page at:

[www.facebook.com/canterburyfd](https://www.facebook.com/canterburyfd) to keep residents informed of immediate happenings. The official website address is: [www.canterburynh.gov/departments/fire-rescue/](http://www.canterburynh.gov/departments/fire-rescue/).

The Department responds to medical emergency calls, requiring firefighters to have advanced medical training through a partnership with Penacook Rescue Service. The Town has no ambulance and no direct ambulance service. One quarter of all calls are responses to emergencies on Interstate 93. The Canterbury Fire and Rescue Department provides outreach and education, including fire prevention talks and woodstove inspections. Additionally, during the month of October the Fire Department hosts an annual Fire Safety and Prevention week that includes activities such as speaking to elementary school classes about fire safety importance.

Through membership with the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact, the Department receives assistance from neighboring communities in case of a major fire and, in turn, provides aid and equipment to other Towns in the area. There are nearly 10 dry hydrants and over a dozen fire access water sources in Canterbury. A Town cistern is available on Intervale Road, in the northwestern corner of Canterbury. A private pump house and hydrant system was installed at Shaker Village. Canterbury

had a notable increase in fire and rescue calls from 2022 to 2023. All calls are dispatched through the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact of which the Canterbury Fire Department is a member. Approximately 25% of Canterbury's calls pertain to incidents on I-93.

### **VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE FUTURE NEEDS SUMMARY**

Engine 3 was purchased in the early 1990s and has failed the pump test for the past five years. During Town Meeting 2023, \$850,000 was authorized for the purchase of a new fire truck. Of that, \$360,000 would come from the Fire Truck Capital Reserves, and the remaining \$490,000 paid for bond or grant funds. Other needs include routine emergency medical services and fire training on a regular basis for volunteers, additional collaboration for search and rescue training with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and training at least half of all Department members in hazardous materials safety and handling. The Department continues to encourage EMTs and paramedics to train and maintain certifications through partial reimbursement. During the 2022 visioning session, it was noted the section of Interstate 93 which includes Canterbury (Exits 17, 18, 19) is among the most unsafe stretches of interstate in the state and resources required to respond to serious crashes can be a concern. The Town relies on the Mutual Aid Compact and the New Hampshire State Police.

Recommendations included moving to two full-time staffers for better call response coverage within the next five years, recruiting more volunteers, and increasing the Department's training budget.



Canterbury Fire Truck

## Police Department Staffing & Equipment

The Canterbury Police Department is staffed by a chief, a lieutenant, and three officers. There is currently a vacancy for a civilian administrative assistant. The Police utilize 2021 hybrid cruisers. The official Department website is: [www.canterburynh.gov/departments/police/](http://www.canterburynh.gov/departments/police/) while its Facebook page permits regular outreach at: [www.facebook.com/canterburypolicedepartment](https://www.facebook.com/canterburypolicedepartment). The Department operates out of the Municipal Safety Complex building. Since 2020, the number of calls for services has been steady with a decline in 2021 due to the pandemic. As population and the economy grows in Canterbury, more police services will likely be necessary.

The Police Department has individual mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns, Merrimack County Sheriff's Department, and the New Hampshire State Police. Police calls for service are dispatched through the Merrimack County Sheriff Dispatch. They enforce state and local laws to ensure resident safety.

### POLICE DEPARTMENT FUTURE NEEDS SUMMARY

The Police Department plans to review their various standard operating procedures and policies annually for revision as situations arise and to be consistent with national standards. Emergency, multi-agency drills with the Shaker Regional School District and the Canterbury Elementary School are a high priority. In addition to the maintenance and upkeep of relevant certifications, essential equipment upgrades are also needed. These include the purchasing of Automated External Defibrillators (AED), as well as radios for interoperability with other jurisdictions.

### Highways, Streets, Lighting, Staffing Department Budget (2021-2023)

Canterbury and abutting communities

Town	Population	2021	2022	2023	2023 Budget (Per Capita)
Boscawen	4,043	\$589,798	\$629,154	\$622,064	\$153.86
Canterbury	2,389	\$762,995	\$825,902	\$863,407	\$361.41
Gilmanton	3,760	\$934,88	\$932,300	\$1,059,105	\$281.67
Loudon	5,591	\$875,705	\$855,064	\$927,743	\$165.96

### Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact Incidents (2022-2023)

Town	2022	2023	% Change
Boscawen	272	218	-3.9
Canterbury	301	342	13.6
Concord	10,644	10,378	-2.5
Loudon	1,195	923	-22.8

### Canterbury Police, Total Service Calls (2020-2023)

Year	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Total Service Calls	2,428	1,826	2,360	2,229

## Town Center

Canterbury has a beautiful, welcoming Town Center on Hackleboro Road. The Town has invested in its Town buildings with recent improvements to the Sam Lake House. The schedule of Town property includes over 17 acres of land and buildings. A highlight of the year for residents is the annual Halloween Trick-or-Treating at the Town Center.

Within the Town Center itself, between Center Road and Hackleboro Road, are a covered bandstand on the Town green; the Town Offices at the Sam Lake House (10 Hackleboro Road); Elkins Public Library (9 Center Road); Meeting House (7 Center Road); and Town Hall (3 Center Road) with five acres and a small, shared parking area. Other buildings and land include the Elizabeth Houser (EFH) Museum (a unique, historical town feature and one-room schoolhouse); Municipal Building (utilized by the Highway, volunteer Fire/Rescue and Police Departments with 5 acres of land); Transfer Station building with over 6 acres of land; and the Elkins Historical Building (former Library at 3 Baptist Road). A small municipal water supply system supplies the Town Center buildings, drawn from a well on the Town Hall land.

The Town website ([www.canterburynh.gov](http://www.canterburynh.gov)) maintained by the Town administration. Town Department and board meetings are posted on the Town calendar, and meeting agendas/minutes, town documents, regulations, and ordinances are also made available online. The latest and most up-to-date information is communicated via a monthly newsletter and weekly email.

While not as current, the town does host its own Facebook page, which can be found at: [www.facebook.com/Townofcanterburynh](https://www.facebook.com/Townofcanterburynh).

### MEETING HOUSE

The historic Meeting House at 7 Center Road serves as the

location where most Boards and Committees meet regularly, within the Town Center.

One recently completed project was to install a ductless air conditioning and heating unit at the building, to increase participant comfort during meetings.

### TOWN HALL

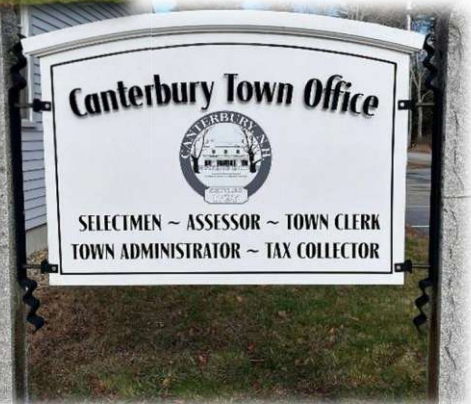
The Town Hall at 3 Center Road is an historic structure dating back to 1754. The Town Hall is accessible to people with disabilities, and improvements completed in 2005 resulted in vastly improved facilities for the meeting, as well as for the assembly of Town Committees and organizations.

### TOWN OFFICES (Sam Lake House)

The renovated Town Offices (Sam Lake House) are located at 10 Hackleboro Road. Residing within the Town Offices are the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Town Administration, Assessing, Code Enforcement, and others. The historic Sam Lake house is adjacent to a fire pond, and the property includes a field of solar panels.



Canterbury Meetinghouse  
& Town offices





## ***Town Annual Expenditures & Capital Improvements Program***

The Town approves its annual budget and expenditures at Town Meeting which is stated in their Annual Report along with all Department, Board, and Committee activities every calendar year. At the 1996 Town Meeting, the voters authorized the Planning Board to prepare and amend a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 674:5-8. A CIP is a schedule that projects future municipal expenditures for necessary capital improvements over a typically six-year period to accommodate changing needs of the community. The six-year CIP is intended to be amended annually. The purpose of the CIP is to recognize and resolve deficiencies in existing recreational opportunities and community facilities on an annual basis; and to anticipate and meet the future demand for capital expenditures, including the replacement of Town vehicles and equipment, renovating Town buildings, producing engineering studies, purchasing land for expansion or conservation, and more.

A Capital Improvements Program helps with the long-term planning of budgets and facilities. The last CIP was produced in 2012, although in 2019 Town administration worked with Department heads for project updates for presentation to the Budget Committee. The CIP update is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.

### ***Elkins Public Library***

The library at 9 Center Road provides materials and informational services to all community residents to fulfill their educational and recreational needs. Special emphasis has been placed on being an educational support center and in stimulating young children's interest in reading and learning. Elkins Library serves as a center for the intellectual growth of the community. The Elkins Library has a small meeting room available to Town groups on an "as available" basis. The library is governed by a Board of Trustees. The official Library website address is:

[www.elkinspubliclibrary.org](http://www.elkinspubliclibrary.org), and it maintains an active Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/ElkinsPublicLibraryNH](https://www.facebook.com/ElkinsPublicLibraryNH).

The Library Director maintains and publishes weekly notices by email to those who sign up, with the list at nearly 1,500 recipients to date. In addition to the Director, the library has four other employees: a circulation manager, a youth services librarian, and two circulation librarians. The Elkins Public Library has a capacity of about 130 people and has been unofficially designated a "cooling shelter" due to the air conditioning that can encourage people to drop in and get out of extreme heat weather. The library's collection is 18,942 materials, as listed in the 2023 Library Director's Report. Patron visits reached 14,130 participants in 2023, up 35% from 2022.

With the placement of the new Elkins Public Library in the Town Center, it is an attraction for all ages open five days per week, Mondays and Tuesdays 9-5, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9-7, and Saturdays 9-12. Free Wi-Fi is available 24/7 outside the Library and laptops are available for use indoors. The Friends of Elkins Public Library (FOEPL) are volunteers who serve as a connecting link between the library and community and always welcome new members and ideas for the upcoming year. One recent accomplishment is the placement of a Discover Book bin outside the library to recycle used and worn books for redistribution to underserved communities including schools, retirement facilities and hospitals in urban areas.

### **LIBRARY SUMMARY FUTURE NEEDS SUMMARY**

Competitive wages to retain staff is a priority for patrons. The Town Library employees receive support and conduct outreach work with Granite Visiting Nurse Association, ServiceLink, and other agencies to provide wellness programs, education, and enrichment year-round. Another priority for the library is to increase its funding. The addition of funding would promote growth and expand on an already robust schedule of programming, focused on residents of all ages. According to the 2022 Institute of Museum and Library Services Annual Report, Elkins Public Library provided 2,498 service hours to the community, with a total attendance of 2,422 residents at weekly and special library programming. To this end, Elkins Public Library needs a larger programming space.



Currently, the Old Town Hall is used for 27 EPL multi-age programs. This involves moving audio and visual equipment across the parking lot, setting up and taking down of each event and directing people away from the Library to the program. The collection cannot be accessed during a program which cuts down on circulation and library usage. The blueprints by Sheerr McCrystal and Palson from October 12, 2004, used in the actual build of the renovated space, clearly notes an additional space called “future expansion” as it was the original intent to have such a space.

This space could also be used by other town organizations as it would have separate lock systems from the Main Library.

In the past, blood drives have been held at the library. However, most recently they have been held in the Parish Hall, with church involvement.



### Library Budget (2020-2023)

Year	Budget	% Change
2020	\$221,075.00	-
2021	\$198,005.00	-10.40
2022	\$236,996.00	19.70
2023	\$259,258.00	9.40



## *Transfer Station, Recycling & Landfill*

Solid waste is of tremendous concern in Canterbury. The Transfer Station at 83 Baptist Road is situated on over 6 acres of land and accepts a wide range of recyclables. The transfer station is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4:00 to 6:45 PM, and on Saturdays 8:00 AM to 5:45 PM. Recycling is mandatory in Canterbury and residents use a pay-as-you-throw program, with the purchase of bags available at the Town Office, Transfer Station and Shaw's in Concord. Upgraded equipment, such as new balers, may be necessary to maintain operations with the influx of recyclables. Tipping fees increased from \$74.70 to \$85.00 per ton, and the new state mandated groundwater testing for PFAS has increased in cost as well. Staff includes a part-time Transfer Station Manager (who works with the Highway Department part-time), and two transfer station employees. Assistance from the Highway Department staff is provided as needed. The official website can be found at <http://www.canterbury-nh.org/transfer-station>.

To determine the future of solid waste and recycling in Canterbury, the Solid Waste Committee is conducting research to assess options and goals for the Town's Transfer Station and recycling program. Considerations include budgeting, building expansion, compactor issues, composting and recycling advocacy, an office building, pay as you throw issues, and staffing. The Transfer Station is situated, in part, atop the Town's old landfill, with landfill closure to occur in the future. A Transfer Station Upgrade Capital Reserve Fund is in place to save for various aspects of the transfer station. The topic of future household hazardous waste (HHW) collections has also been discussed, and options include joining with other communities to share costs and administration duties.

## TRANSFER STATION, RECYCLING & LANDFILL, FUTURE NEEDS SUMMARY

The Town recently invested in upgraded recycling, with the new baler up and running as of fall 2023. Transfer station staff and highway employees are trained on the operations of the baler, and only baled cardboard is accepted by the vendor. In the future, plastic and mixed paper will also be baled. The financial aspects of recycling are a key issue. A long-term goal is to host a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day, every two years, with the aid of grant funding. In 2022, \$1,000 was set aside in the Capital Reserve Fund for landfill closure, and the implementation of future needs may benefit greatly from an even larger annual deposit.





## Town Cemeteries

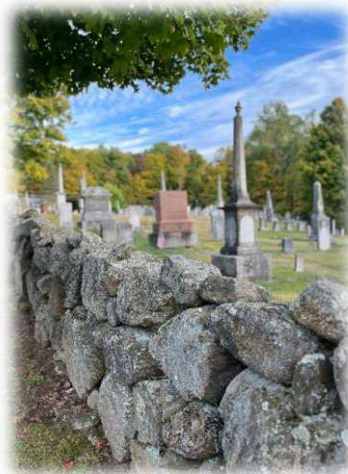
Canterbury has 33 documented historic family and community cemeteries, of which the Town maintains 27. Only one of these cemeteries, Maple Grove Cemetery, has ample available space for future interments. In 2010, Canterbury's burial rate remained consistent at six to eight interments a year. At that time, it was expected that there would be enough burial space for many years into the future. There were 16 deaths registered in the Town of Canterbury for the year ending December 2023.

Cemeteries are overseen by the three Cemetery Trustees and a cemetery historian. A cemetery sexton in Canterbury records burials and manages daily operations. The list of Town-owned cemeteries referenced in the 2023 Annual report is tabulated to the right. The location of all 33 cemeteries in Town can be found on the Community Facilities Map.

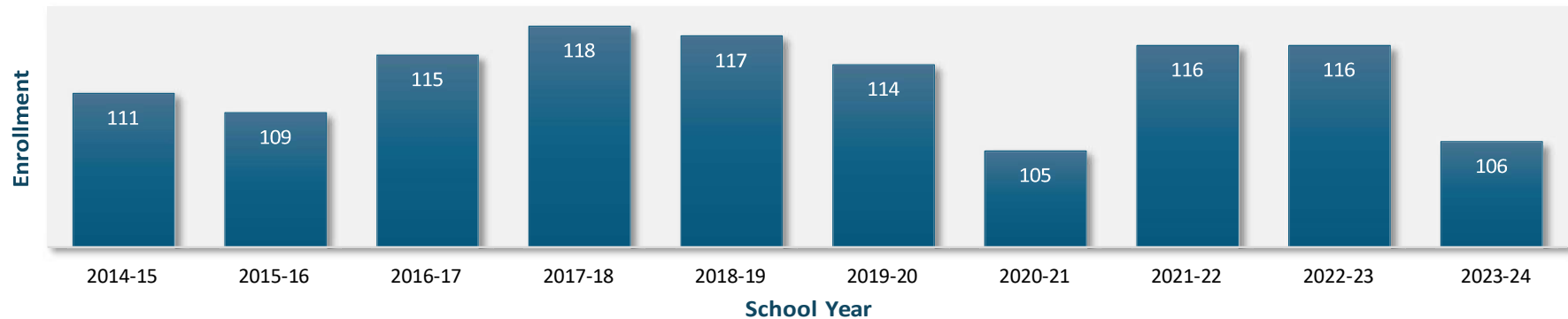
### CEMETERIES, FUTURE NEEDS SUMMARY

The Town wants to develop engineering, surveying, wetlands mapping, permitting and conceptual design of a second entrance to Maple Grove Cemetery to create access off Baptist Hill Road. A new entrance was created at the Shell Meetinghouse Cemetery to provide access to lower topography, creating an opportunity to inter remains in a previously inaccessible area.

Cemetery	Size (Acres)	Location	Lot #	New Internet Capacity
Lyford	0.08	Shaker Rd	101 073 0	0
Center	2.4	Center Rd	107 029 0	0
Matthews	0.04	Baptist Hill Rd	208 018 0	0
Smith Morrill	0.05	Borough Rd	221 014 0	0
Brown	0.04	Asby Rd	227 006 0	0
Shell Meetinghouse	0.52	Baptist Hill Rd	229 004 0	YES - TBD
Osgoodite Family	0.11	Borough Rd	232 008 0	0
Maple Grove	6.20	Baptist Hill Rd	241 023 0	YES - TBD
Kimball II West	0.08	Pickard Rd	253 039 0	0



### Canterbury Elementary School Enrollment (2018-2024)



### *Canterbury School District*

Canterbury has been part of the Shaker Regional School District, School Administrative Unit 80 (SAU 80) with the Town of Belmont since 1971. The K-5 Canterbury Elementary School at 15 Baptist Road, originally constructed in the 1950s, was enlarged with an addition in 1991. Middle and high school students attend classes in Belmont. The Elementary School's web address is: [www.ces.sau80.org](http://www.ces.sau80.org) while Shaker Regional School District's website is [www.sau80.org](http://www.sau80.org).

In the mid/late 2000s, enrollment was at an all-time high at nearly 140 students, but in recent years enrollment has declined. According to NH Department of Education enrollment and SAU 80 monthly reports, over the past six years, enrollment in Canterbury Elementary School has decreased by almost 11% as shown by the figure above, although it appears to be stabilizing at around 112-118 enrollees in 2024.

### SCHOOL SUMMARY OF FUTURE NEEDS

While overall numbers are in decline, the SAU 80 reports that there is an increased need for special education paraprofessional support, as well as behavioral management support for students in preschool through first grade. The Canterbury Elementary School has limited space for small group work, and there is an overlap between art and music classes due to shared space with multiple grade levels. Additionally, there is inadequate accessibility for children with disabilities, limited conference and office space, and no staff room. There is also a general and decided lack of storage space, whether that be for heating/instructional materials, hallway space for student clothing, backpacks, lunchboxes, extra footwear, etc. – all of which must currently be stored in the classroom.

The Canterbury Elementary School's functional capacity is sufficient, however, with a projected functional capacity for 147 students per SAU 80's contractor study.

## *Utilities*

Available utilities in Canterbury are comprised of electric, natural gas, telephone, internet and a small municipal water system in the Town Center that serves only those Town-owned buildings.

### *Electrical & Natural Gas Service*

The electrical suppliers in Canterbury are Eversource Electric, NH Electric Co-operative, and Unitil. Natural gas is supplied by Liberty Utilities. Eversource serves 554 customers within the easterly section of Town, from its southeastern border with Loudon to its northern border with Northfield. Unitil serves 648 customers in the western section of Town from Exit 17 east to New Road, Morrill Road, north to Borough Road and west to the Canterbury rest area on I-93 and crossing to the Merrimack River just across from the Merrimack County Nursing Home in Boscawen, then south along the Merrimack River back to Exit 17. NH Electric Cooperative serves only 76 customers in Canterbury, located in the northeastern corner of the Town. Liberty Utilities natural gas service is supplied to areas of Concord, Boscawen, Bow, Canterbury, Loudon and Northfield. Natural gas is typically used to heat homes and hot water, which can also be accomplished by deliveries of heating oil and propane from area companies. Woodstove heating is often used as a primary source and backup source during power outages.

Solar energy is popular in Canterbury, used by the Town and by residents. Residents can install small solar arrays on their roofs or ground mounted to power homes and feed electricity back to the grid under net metering. One of the earliest adopters of solar energy, in 2010 the Town began its set up of the first of two arrays, with a field of solar panels at the Municipal Building (26 Baptist Road) property to partly power the Municipal Building, fire, police and highway. A second array was established at the Town offices (Sam Lake House), which supplies power to the town offices, library, and more.

## *Energy*

Canterbury has a long history of and interest in energy conservation and renewable energy development. At this point in history and in the interest of future generations, the Town is ready to establish long range energy goals. Two Town committees of volunteers are currently focused on creating and sustaining energy conservation and development programs: the Energy Committee and the Canterbury Community Power Committee (CCPC). The Energy Committee is working with residents to improve energy efficiency in their homes through both education and weatherization projects. The CCPC is involved in the development of renewable municipal energy sources and storage systems for Town buildings and eventually for those of residents and businesses. However, such a scattergun approach to improving Canterbury's energy future is less effective than a coordinated, long-term drive toward a stated goal.

The Energy Committee and the CCPC propose that the Town establish itself as an energy-conscious community by adopting the following goals, as stated on the next page, to be accomplished by December 31, 2034.

### **ENERGY RESOURCES SUMMARY OF FUTURE NEEDS**

Large-scale solar arrays for the Town buildings and a Community Power group electric service for residents and businesses may be solid options for the future of renewable energy and the ability to obtain electricity at a reasonable, lower cost. Economic development will only be possible with appropriate electrical services.



## *Proposed Goals to Establish Canterbury as an Energy-Conscious Community*

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The below goals and objectives for reaching them have been proposed by both the Energy Committee and the Canterbury Community Power Committee (CCPC) over the past two years. Further details about how these goals might be achieved are available in Appendix 1.

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1. Convert to 100% renewable energy used for its buildings and lighting, and work towards the generation of enough renewable energy in Canterbury to support future electric vehicle (EV) needs.
2. Complete the transition of its municipal fleet to 100% electric vehicles.
3. Create local energy storage systems to supply 100% backup power to all residents and businesses.
4. Conduct energy audits and complete any required retrofitting of all municipal buildings.
5. Consider establishing an electricity generation trust fund to be available to the business and residential community for the purpose of purchasing new energy technology.
6. Adopt building standards and develop financial incentives programs that promote higher energy efficiency standards in residential dwellings and other buildings. In addition, educate residents about the responsible use of energy.
7. Create new landowner policies that would encourage the installation of solar farms.
8. Develop a set of data to be updated annually that quantifies energy used by homes and businesses and tallies percentages of buildings with photovoltaic (PV) solar, heat pump installations, EV charging stations and other energy related technologies.
9. Encourage the development of EV fast chargers in key locations in Canterbury.
10. Set energy reduction targets based on the above data.

## ***Water & Sewer***

There is one small municipal water system in the Town Center that serves only those Town-owned buildings. Two municipal wells, one serving the Municipal Building at 26 Baptist Road and one serving the Sam Lake House water system, are present in Town. All public buildings that serve 25 or more people like the Canterbury Elementary School will have a community water system as registered by NHDES. The new Exit 17 development will have a registered water system, and its sewer system may tie into Concord's wastewater system. Whether a private or community water system, PFAS and groundwater contaminants can be present.

There is no municipal water or wastewater treatment system in Canterbury. There are community septic systems in the Town Center. The rest of Canterbury is served by private drinking water wells and private septic systems.

### **WATER AND SEWER SUMMARY OF FUTURE NEEDS**

The recent visioning session indicated that if water and sewer infrastructure were to be expanded, the most likely area would be in the vicinity of Exit 17 through an agreement with the City of Concord to extend services into Canterbury.



Photovoltaic Solar Array Behind Town Center

## ***Telephone Service & Broadband Internet***

The telephone company in Canterbury is Consolidated Communications, a fiber optic provider of landline telephone, television and internet service. The primary cellular access is provided by AT&T Services which owns a telecommunications tower and antenna array on Borough Road. Most of Canterbury should receive 4G/LTE service, yet discussions with Town Departments, emergency responders, and by resident survey indicate cell coverage is inadequate depending on topography or weather conditions. The SBA telecommunications tower with its three antenna arrays is located at 129 Intervale Road and is mainly used for emergency services repeaters.

Broadband internet does not currently cover the entire Town and is supplied by Comcast, which may also offer “soft phone” or voice over internet protocol (VOIP) coverage depending on the personal software used. Greater access to high-speed internet and cellular services are a high priority of Canterbury residents and Town Departments. It is understood that Comcast is planning in the next year to extend broadband internet service to areas not yet served.

### **TELEPHONE SERVICE & BROADBAND INTERNET SUMMARY OF FUTURE NEEDS**

Canterbury requires better access to high-speed internet while recognizing additional infrastructure costs may be incurred.

Much of the fiber optic cabling is in place, yet its functionality and reliability seemed inadequate. The need for full cellular coverage across the entire Town has been repeated for over a decade but with little result. Attracting the location of additional telecommunications towers and cellular providers to areas of “dead zones” is necessary for the Town's residents, emergency services, and businesses. Consideration for maintaining aesthetics and community character will also be required and may be addressed by updating the Zoning Ordinance provisions.

## *Recreational Facilities*

A volunteer Recreation Committee serves Canterbury by organizing activities for younger residents including Halloween Candy Stops, Canterbury Youth Soccer for pre-K through grade 5 children, summer 2023 Caramba Soccer Camp, and for maintenance of the Town Beach at Riverland Conservation Area. A basketball league and a ski program have been implemented in past years. Parks and Recreation operate under a small budget of less than \$4,000 annually.

With the community's rural characteristics, there are multiple four-season recreational opportunities in Canterbury. The Merrimack River forms the western border with the Town of Boscawen and provides the official Town access point at the Riverland Conservation Area, mostly for swimming, although carry-in canoes can be launched.

With such a long river corridor, additional access points for all types of active water recreation such as a boat launch and fishing may be sought. An emphasis should be placed on the importance of water safety and preparedness for the river's strong undercurrents; and acknowledgement given to the presence of drowning risk in the absence of due diligence. The Town has posted signage and has an emergency life ring at the Riverland Conservation Area.

Canterbury's primary built recreational facilities are the hiking trails on conservation areas maintained by the Conservation Commission and the snowmobile trails over private land maintained by the New Hampshire Sno-Shakers. In the winter months, the snowmobile club operates a clubhouse and a large network of trails for snowmobile enthusiasts and cross-country skiers. The unique 2021 Canterbury Tales and Trails guide available on the Elkins Library website and in print narrates trails-goers around more than 30 trails, many with cultural sites and surprises. The official Committee Facebook page is: [www.facebook.com/Canterburyrec603](https://www.facebook.com/Canterburyrec603).

### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES & STAFFING, OVERALL SUMMARY OF FUTURE NEEDS

Public opinion agrees solutions regarding recreational opportunities should be "Canterbury specific." The Conservation Commission has expressed interest in regional trails connections and utilizing trails to entice economic growth. With local trails management, landowners would have an outlet to address concerns if there were trails-related issues. When there is interest, recreational programs such as the basketball and ski programs could be reestablished.





## *Canterbury Shaker Village*

Located at 288 Shaker Road, Canterbury Shaker Village is an internationally known non-profit museum founded in 1969 to preserve the heritage of the Canterbury Shakers.

Designated as a National Historic Landmark for its architectural integrity and significance, the Village has 25 restored original Shaker buildings, 4 reconstructed Shaker buildings, and 694 acres of forests, fields, gardens, nature trails, and mill ponds under permanent conservation easement. Tours, programs, exhibits, and events help visitors chart their journey through the Shaker values of simplicity, caring, and community. Their web address is [www.shakers.org](http://www.shakers.org).

A map of Recreation Facilities, Conservation Areas and Trails is included with this chapter and more information regarding trails and walkability can be found in the Transportation Chapter.

## *Historic District Commission*

Canterbury's Historic District Commission (HDC) was established to oversee the architectural style of Canterbury Center in the Center Historic District (CHD) zone and the Shaker Village Historic Overlay District zone to ensure the historic character remains true and consistent over time as found in rural New England villages. Building exterior standards are regulated in the two Historic Districts and the HDC must approve any historic structure demolitions, new construction, change in natural features, or renovations.

The HDC is responsible for overseeing the Historic District Zoning Ordinance (Article 13) and is working to update their review guidelines and application for approval along with new regulations pertaining to the Historic Districts. The guidelines include removal of mature trees, fences and walls, outdoor lighting, outbuildings and other features of the historic properties.



Canterbury Shaker Village,  
2023

## *Conservation Areas*

The Conservation Commission conserves property with social and ecological value in perpetuity by both ownership by the town and through conservation easements on privately owned lands. There are approximately 1,100 acres of permanently conserved land in town that protect the natural woodland features, farms, river frontage, wetlands and wildlife habitat of the Town. All of the conserved lands are listed in the appendix and shown on the Conservation Lands map.

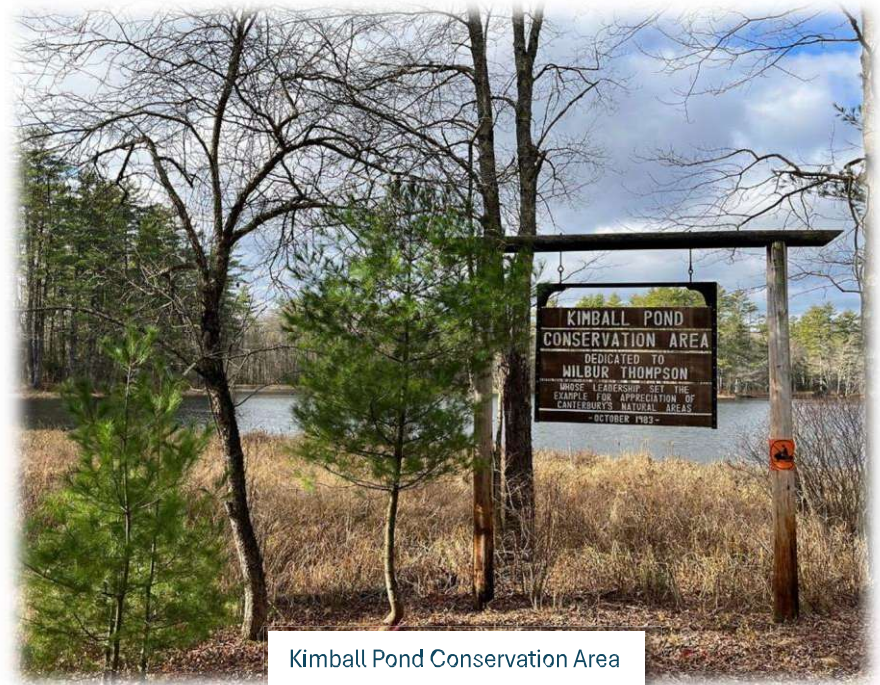
Some of the more notable town-owned lands include the Kimball Pond/Robert S. Fife Conservation area (92 acres), the Schoodac Conservation Area (215 acres) and the Riverland Conservation area (70 acres). The largest privately-owned conservation lands include Brookford Farm (606 acres), Canterbury Shaker Village (500 acres), Meeh/McCullough North Family Farm easement (693 acres) and the Deepwood Forest (396 acres). In addition, the State of NH owns the Muchyedo Banks Wildlife Management Area along the Merrimack River (291 acres).

The Land Use Change Tax fund is a capital reserve fund created by the tax on land when it is taken out of the Current Use program. This fund allows the town to effectively conserve properties when opportunities arise. Conserved lands in Canterbury are designated as either conservation easements or fee-owned properties (whether privately or publicly owned).

Conservation easements are held by private land trusts such as Five Rivers Conservation Trust and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests or publicly owned by the State of NH or the Town of Canterbury. The Conservation Commission periodically monitors conservation properties under the Town's ownership or where the town holds the conservation easement. More information about Canterbury's conservation areas is found in the Natural Features chapter of the Plan for Tomorrow.

## CONSERVATION AREAS SUMMARY OF FUTURE NEEDS

Land conserved in perpetuity cannot be developed. There remains great interest in identifying and protecting additional high value conservation areas. Conservation priorities desired by the community include preserving agricultural land, retaining large blocks of unfragmented forest land, preserving wildlife corridors, protecting water resources and wetlands, and preserving open space. The Conservation Commission is continually working to identify and conserve additional properties with willing landowners.



Kimball Pond Conservation Area



## *Objectives and Recommendations*

This chapter has focused on the Town's community and recreational facilities and utilities and has described the importance of maintaining a high level of service to Canterbury's residents. There are a variety of strategies to adapt to the changing demands of the populace and environment.

### *Objective One*

Promote planning and implementation measures related to the Town's infrastructure.

- 1 Continue to evaluate options for obtaining widely available, high-speed internet access, as well as address the need to increase reliable cellular service. (*Community-wide broadband is expected to be available by the end of 2024.*)
- 2 Attract telecommunications tower and cellular providers to rural locations in Canterbury to provide complete cellular coverage across the community. Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure easier location and placement towers while blending with rural characteristics.
- 3 Continue to support Community Power options via the newly formed Community Power Committee with the goal of reducing electrical costs for all Canterbury customers.

### *Objective Two*

Undertake long-range planning, testing, and survey tasks to prepare for future needs.

- 1 Develop the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) with annual updates to transparently engage in long-term planning for community facility and capital needs projects.
- 2 Continue to assess Canterbury's waste management and recycling program, including potential Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections.
- 3 Promote regular water quality testing for contaminants and PFAS-type chemicals by residents at their homes and report the results of the Town water systems and Transfer Station monitoring well testing.

# 8 Natural Features

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**Overview:** Natural features impact the character and beauty of a town and the health, safety, and enjoyment of its residents, making them key in maintaining a strong and sustainable community.

Natural features contribute significantly to Canterbury's character. Certain development types and patterns that occur in a single town may have a profound impact on the natural environment within that town, inextricably linking this chapter to the previous Land Use chapter. The following pages will explore the past and present state of Canterbury's natural and scenic resources and suggest how they should be treated in the future.

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**Elements:**

- Discussion of Natural Features
- Overview of Current Efforts and Goals
- Challenges and Recommendations

## *From the Community Survey*

**"Maintain the rural atmosphere."**

**"Rural, small town, pretty much what we are now! We love our town, enjoy its beauty and relative quiet."**

**"We should remain an oasis of forests and wildlife in an area of increasing sprawl and development."**

**"Keep Canterbury a place for wildlife habitat. Encourage open spaces."**

**"Preserving our natural resources for coming generations."**

**"Rural, with plentiful farms and open spaces."**

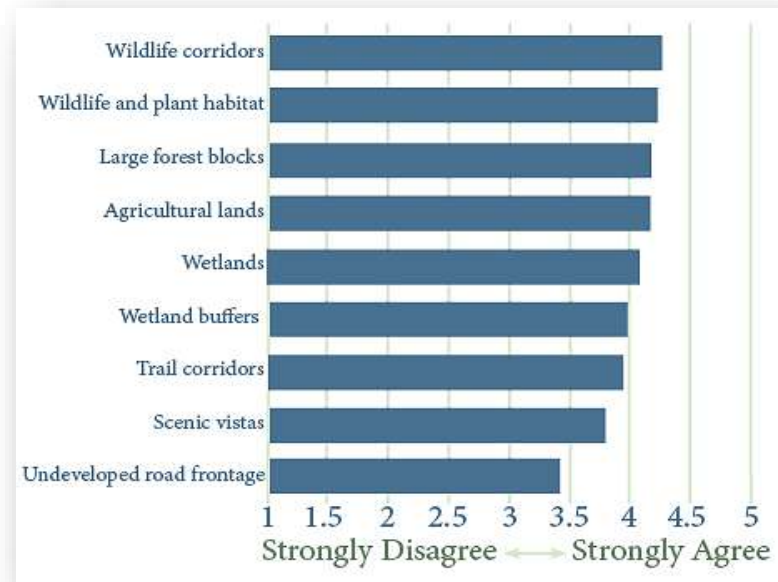
**"Environmental protection should be of utmost concern."**

## *The Town's Thoughts*

Throughout the Community Survey, there was strong appreciation of Canterbury's vast inventory of natural resources, specifically for the rural character and high quality of life they provide. Similar to the previous Plan for Tomorrow, overwhelming desire and support was given for preservation of the Town's natural resources, including open space, scenic vistas, agricultural fields, forested areas, undeveloped lands, and the recreational opportunities they provide. Favorite locations frequently mentioned in the Survey included Morrill Pond, Kimball Pond, Shaker Village, Merrimack River, and the town beach, but residents had a large range of natural areas they value.

Wildlife corridors were the highest rated priority for conservation of open space, followed by wildlife/plant habitat, large forest blocks, and agricultural lands. This feedback will help establish a clear and consistent direction for the Town's future preservation of its natural resources.

### **Conservation Priorities 2021 Community Survey Results**



## Importance of Natural Features

The Town's extensive undeveloped areas provide residents with clean air, clean water, and a healthy, resilient environment to live in. They also provide a source of locally grown food, forest products, and other benefits. Canterbury's residents have consistently expressed their desire to protect and preserve the Town's natural resources, rural character, and scenic beauty for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations. Many of these resources are irreplaceable and need to be intentionally conserved for future generations.

Canterbury's natural resources display the influences of both people and nature. The hills, valleys, soils, slopes, water resources, and plants and animals that live in town are all natural resources. The impacts of working the land for farming and forestry over many generations have had a profound effect upon the fields and forests seen today. Effectively managed working lands are consistent with many of the conservation goals of this Plan for Tomorrow update. Certain conservation goals may be best achieved by retaining some unmanaged natural areas. The tapestry of fields, forests, ponds, wetlands, streams, and rivers will continue to evolve. Careful planning can ensure that future generations continue to learn from, experience, and enjoy the natural world.

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### Vision Statement

*Canterbury's open space and natural resources are a defining characteristic of the town. We have maintained the feel of a small, rural town that is proud to continue farming, forestry, and enjoying the natural world. We have ensured permanent conservation of farm soils, water resources, and high-value natural areas, including large blocks of forestland that support a variety of plants and animals, provide clean water, create connectivity for climate adaptation, and provide space for human enjoyment.*

---

## Defining Open Space

Open space consists of land that has not been developed or devoted to transportation, housing, business or developed recreational activities. This includes the forests and fields that surround homes and provide natural resources that serve residents. Well planned developed outdoor recreation areas such as golf courses, swimming beaches and play fields are not categorized as "open space" but do contribute to the quality of life in Canterbury.

### CURRENT EFFORTS

The Town – through the Conservation Commission and with the support of the Board of Selectmen, the participation of residents, and the support of public agencies and public and private funding sources – has actively conserved land for environmental, social, and economic benefit. Conservation has been focused on these special resource areas:

- ▷ Large contiguous areas with limited residential development and high conservation values such as:
  - Sunset Hill
  - Bean Hill Highlands north of Hackleboro Road
  - Rolling terrain, wetlands, and water bodies near the Schoodac Conservation Area south of Baptist Road and East of Morrill Road
  - Landscapes surrounding Shaker Village
- ▷ Water resources and riparian corridors such as:
  - Merrimack River and adjacent lands
  - Undeveloped or sparsely developed ponds
  - Significant wetlands
  - Aquifers
- ▷ Active farmlands and valuable agricultural soils
- ▷ Land and trails that support traditional outdoor recreational activities

Since the 2010 Plan for Tomorrow, the Conservation Commission has taken major steps toward creating an Open Space Plan to guide future conservation in Canterbury and has completed the following steps:

- ▷ Mapped all town-owned property and identified parcels that should be kept undeveloped to serve the Town's conservation goals. Received approval from the Board of Selectmen to manage the designated properties for conservation.
- ▷ Created an index of all conservation property in Town that categorizes ownership and type of conservation by the following categories:
  - Public/Nonprofit Conservation Land (fee ownership)
  - Town-Owned Conservation Land (fee ownership)
  - Private Land with a Conservation Easement Held by the Town
  - Private Land with a Conservation Easement Held by a Nonprofit or Agency
- ▷ Created a set of maps (see appendix) that details key natural resources in Town. The Conservation Commission uses these maps to evaluate the conservation value of properties when they become available for permanent protection. The Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen also have these maps so that natural resource information can be used in land use and policy decisions.
- ▷ Conducted Natural Resource Inventories:
  - Schoodac Conservation Area
  - Sawyers Ferry Forest
  - Rocky Pond Forest
  - Misery Road Lot
- ▷ Conducted Rapid Ecological Assessments:
  - Canterbury Town Forest (on Briar Bush Road)
  - Hannah Moor Lot (off Abbot Road)
- ▷ Created Management Plans:

- Kimball Pond Conservation Area
- Robert S. Fife Forest
- Riverland Conservation Area

Created an initial co-occurrence map using unweighted data from the natural resource maps and the conservation properties map to identify areas with the densest occurrence of natural resources. In 2022, continued to work to update the co-occurrence map using weighted data. The current maps are included in the appendix and future iterations will provide the basis of the Town's Open Space Plan by identifying landscapes with greatest conservation value as high priorities for conservation.

Scenic Roadways

## Recent Conservation Projects

*High-value conservation properties conserved through purchase or conservation easement since 2005 are shown in the table below. For a complete list of all conservation lands see the full list in the appendix and the Conservation Lands map.*

Name	Acres	Location
<b>Robert S. Fife Conservation Area</b>	49	W. of Kimball Pond Rd
<b>Merrimack River Conservation Area</b>	600+	Forest and frontage, along Merrimack River
<b>Muchyedo Banks *WMA</b>	291	Along Merrimack River, off Shoestring Rd
<b>Spender Meadow</b>	118	Adjacent to Morrill Rd *WMA
<b>Sloping Acres Farm</b>	37	N. of West Rd (active dairy farm)

\*WMA: Wildlife Management Area



## Current Use and Managed Forestry

Many parcels are placed under Current Use or Forestry Management to promote conservation. The location of these properties can be seen in the Current Use and Managed Forest Land maps. These designations can change from year to year. The map featured in the appendix, along with the table below were created in reference to 2019 assessing data. The acreage reflects the full area of the parcels, but both designations may comprise only partial parcels data which is not reported.

Land Designation	Parcels	Acres	% Of Total
Current Use	568	21,007	73.2%
Managed Forestry	104	5,660	19.7%

## Land, Air, Water: Natural Habitats & Communities

Canterbury's land is diverse as a result of the various landforms and the impacts of glaciers. As the glaciers crossed the land 10,000 years ago, they exposed ledge outcrops and distributed soil in various ways. Sandy soil is present along the Merrimack and Soucook Rivers, deposited by water flow from glacial melt. At higher elevations, glacial till soils can be found and to the north there are shallow soils with ledge outcroppings. While hard pans, rocky and poorly drained soils are common throughout town, there are select areas of productive soil cleared for agriculture. Areas along the Merrimack River are some of the finest agricultural soils in the state.

Historically, much of the town was cleared for agriculture including grazing. While some fields remain, many areas have reverted to forest. The numerous steep slopes, shallow soils, ledges, and wetlands define much of the Town's area and have presented constraints for development. New construction methods have allowed development on sites that were previously unbuildable.

## Soils in Canterbury

The table provided below, along with the Soils & Agricultural Land map in the appendix, can be used to guide both conservation and development decisions related to farmland.

Soil Suitability Level	Acres	% Of Total
1. Soils Are Prime for All Farmland	1,385	4.8%
2. Soils For Farmland of Statewide Importance	1,863	6.5%
3. Soils For Farmland of Local Importance	16,555	57.7%
4. Soils Are Prime for Farmland If Protected from Flooding or Not Frequently Flooded	203	0.7%

## SURFACE WATERS

Canterbury's brooks, streams, and ponds contribute water to wetlands and recharge the groundwater supply that provide residents with drinking water. Undisturbed natural vegetation in the hills and along the banks of streams provide erosion control, which enhances water quality. The riparian corridors along streams are highly prized by many creatures. The Town's waters are divided into three watersheds that eventually drain to the Merrimack River:

- From the highest hills in the north, the eastern slopes drain toward the Soucook River.
- The western slopes drain directly toward the Merrimack River.
- The central area of Town drains south toward Concord in several streams.

The Merrimack River has been identified as a conservation priority by residents. The Town has made great progress in conserving river frontage and adjacent agricultural land, including a farm of over 600 acres now privately owned with a conservation easement, and the Muchyedo Banks Wildlife Management Area (managed by NH Fish & Game) that was once threatened with development as an ash dump.

The primary sources of water pollution are non-point sources. These include siltation from soil disturbance and highway maintenance as well as runoff from roads, home sites, and other developed areas.

## WETLANDS

The importance of wetlands to the whole ecosystem and to the health, safety and welfare of the public has been recognized in both Federal and New Hampshire legislation and by residents. In addition to providing important support for wildlife habitats, wetlands protect drinking water supplies by filtering out toxins and helping to recharge aquifers. Wetlands also play an important role in minimizing flood damage by storing excess runoff.

Wetlands are defined within the Town Ordinance as “an area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.”

The main types of wetlands in Canterbury are forested swamps, shrub thickets, emergent marshes and wet meadows, aquatic beds, and some bogs and fens. Each corresponds to different drainage and flooding characteristics and vegetation cover.

## Wetlands in Canterbury

Wetland Type	Acres	% of total
<b>Freshwater Emergent Wetland</b>	1,481	5.2%
<b>Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland</b>	1,943	6.8%
<b>Freshwater Pond</b>	682	2.4%
<b>Riverine</b>	403	1.4%
<b>Lake</b>	351	1.2%

There are numerous threats to wetlands including filling, dredging and alteration to drainage, sediment inputs, and point and non-point pollution runoff.

## GROUND & DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

All Canterbury households depend on groundwater for domestic use. Most residents rely upon individual wells while there are a few small community public water supply systems. Ground water is present in the fractured bedrock and in the soil above it. Older dug wells draw water from the shallower soil while most new wells are drilled in bedrock.

The sands of the river valley are generally too fine to be suitable for a large capacity municipal well. Water derived from bedrock in Canterbury is generally abundant but commonly contains high iron and manganese components in metamorphic formations. There are small areas of granite bedrock that provide lesser amounts of high-quality water. Shallow dug wells are increasingly susceptible to contamination and drought.

Historically, Canterbury has had adequate uncontaminated groundwater. Because residents obtain water from their own wells, efforts to protect groundwater quality should remain a particularly high priority.

# ***Canterbury Water Resources***

The Water Resources and Drinking Water maps in the Maps Index depict all of the water resources in Town. The table below lists the surface waters grouped by watershed

## **Merrimack River with several horseshoe ponds**

### **Burnham Brook**

- a. Morrill Pond (at Hackleboro Orchard)
- b. Kimball Pond and adjacent wetlands
- c. Wetlands, E. of Rte. 132 and across from Wilson Rd
- d. Wetlands, N. of New Rd, near Pickard Rd
- e. Brook from below Morrill Pond, draining W. towards the Big Meadow
- f. Horseshoe Pond, which drains to wetlands and to Burnham Brook

### **Hazelton Brook with major wetlands**

#### **Forrest Pond Brook**

- a. Forrest Pond
- b. Waterfalls on Forrest Pond Brook

#### **Bryant Brook**

- a. Hazelton Brook
- b. Forest Pond Brook
- c. The Big Meadow
- d. Waterfalls and old mill site behind historic house west of NH 132

#### **Pickard Brook**

- a. Several major wetlands and minor waterfalls along brook

### **Shaker Brook (between Baptist Hill and Shaker Roads)**

- a. Pond at headwaters, N. of Baptist Hill Rd
- b. Major wetlands along brook, including Meadow Pond North and Meadow Pond
- c. Peverly Meadow
- d. Peverly Falls, below the Meadow

## **Hayward Brook**

- a. Crane Neck Pond
- b. Morill Mill Pond
- c. Mill site, below Morrill Mill Pond
- d. Spender Meadow
- e. Schoodac Wetlands
- f. Wetland along Hayward Brook, S. of New Rd.

## **Shaker Ponds**

- a. The Long Ditch
- b. Long Pond
- c. Runaway Pond
- d. Fountain Pond
- e. Ponds at the Village
- f. Carding Mill Pond

## **Gues Meadow Brook**

- a. Rocky Pond
- b. Lyford Pond
- c. New Pond
- d. Wetlands along Gues Meadow Brook
- e. Pond E. of Snowshoe Hill, and brook below

## **Soucook River**

- a. Rocky Pond

## **Flag Hole Marsh**

## AIR QUALITY

Air quality problems in New Hampshire are mostly created elsewhere and must be solved at a state, national, or international level. The abundant forest cover in Canterbury has a positive impact upon local air quality. Local sources of air pollution include Interstate 93, incinerators, and power plants, outdated or improperly run wood stoves and furnaces, brush burning, transportation, and numerous small engines powering everything from lawn mowers to recreational vehicles.

## VEGETATION, FORESTRY: WILDLIFE HABITAT & NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Habitat protection is critical to the conservation of plants, animals, and the general quality of life for residents in Canterbury. Undeveloped areas of open space encourage and protect species diversity, as well as enhance aesthetic enjoyment, recreation, and education.

Canterbury has unique natural communities, some of which contain fragile habitats for rare and endangered species including along the Merrimack River and other places in Town. Fragmentation of large blocks of open space into smaller tracts has adverse impacts upon wildlife, forestry, and other conservation values.

Through the years some areas have been placed under permanent protection through acquisition by the Town, the State and private conservation groups, while other land remains privately owned and has been protected through conservation easements.

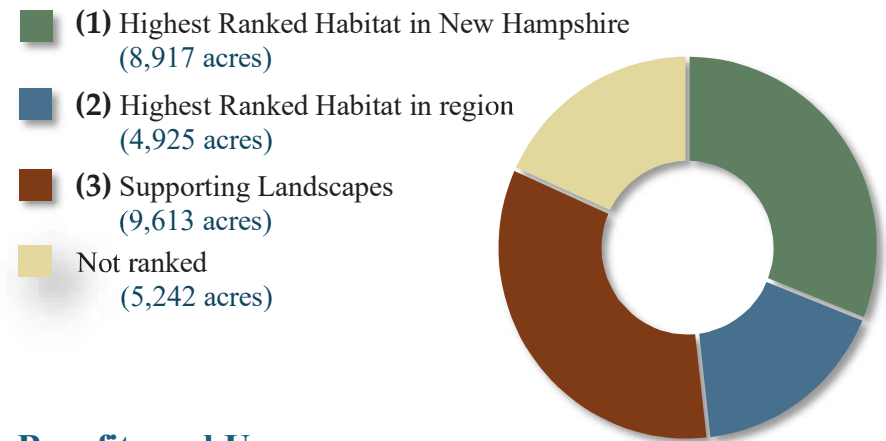
Currently there are several large areas of contiguous open space in Town including the Sunset Hill/Bean Hill Highlands north of Hackleboro Road; the rolling terrain, wetlands and water bodies near the Schoodac Conservation Area south of Baptist Road and east of Morrill Road; and the landscapes north and south of Shaker Village.

These large swaths of land provide a wide range of habitat types that are critical for large mammal species and other species intolerant of human influences. These areas also provide sources for clean water and forest resources. Much of the land in these areas is categorized by The Nature Conservancy as “More Resilient” to climate change.

The cumulative effect of scattered development on larger contiguous wildlife habitats is an important issue to be considered as part of zoning and subdivision regulations.

## Habitat Tiers

*A chart showing the breakdown of Canterbury's habitat quality according to Wildlife Action Plan Data. The location of these areas can be seen on the [Wildlife Habitat Tiers](#) map.*



## Benefits and Uses

### QUIET ENJOYMENT

Experiencing a quiet rural lifestyle is a major reason people live in or move to Canterbury. This quiet enjoyment was cited frequently in both the most recent and past resident surveys. However, Canterbury experiences noise generated on both sides of Town, which should be monitored.

On Canterbury's west side, I-93 can produce traffic noise and undesirable air quality. It is expected that traffic volumes on the highway will increase over time. The benefit of I-93 is that NH 132, which runs parallel, will remain local in nature and is an unlikely target to be expanded to accommodate increased regional traffic.

The town also faces increasing noise potential on its east side with the development and expansion of the New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon. Noise from the track can be heard throughout much of Canterbury during race and practice events, as well as recently approved non-race events such as concerts. Together, these events affect most days of the summer and early fall months, sometimes well into the late evening. Traffic on more popular event days in Loudon can also impinge on the rural character of Canterbury.

## AGRICULTURE

Agricultural lands are critical resources to Canterbury for their ability to produce food, provide wildlife habitat, and offer scenic vistas.

The agricultural heritage of the Town is evident in the numerous fields located along most roads. Decades ago, the now empty fields provided food for people and farm animals. With the industrialization and globalization of food supply, the need for many of these fields for agricultural production has waned. Many of the town's fields have been subdivided into residential housing lots. The fragmentation has limited the ability to produce traditional agricultural products. Some of these fields remain mowed for hay while others are no longer in production.

Despite the changes in the Town's agricultural landscape, as of 2023, one commercial orchard and two commercial dairy farms - one of which provides a wide range of organic meats and produce - and several small farms producing everything from

fresh produce to distilled spirits remain active. In recent years agriculture has changed, leading to many residents having farm animals on their property, and more vegetable production.

In Canterbury, many producers sell their products through farm stands and a farmer's market. In the spring, maple production occurs throughout Town. There is a community appreciation for locally grown agricultural products.

The Town's recent protection of around 600 acres, once owned by a commercial sod farm along the Merrimack River, was a major step in ensuring continued agricultural production on the Town's best agricultural soil.

## FORESTRY

Historically, Forestry has been an essential part of Canterbury's economy and would ideally remain so. Forests provide wood for fuel and construction and have supported residents who earn their living from the woods. Forested lands provide clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation opportunities and are essential for sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.

Fragmentation of large, forested areas into smaller tracts and residential development disrupts habitat, can curtail recreational use, and limits forestry.

## RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENIC BEAUTY

The visual elements of rural character in Canterbury are the traditional working landscape and land use patterns relating to agricultural and forestry heritage, the open fields, undeveloped hillsides, and the scenic roads lined with mature trees and old stone walls. A small population in combination with large lots has traditionally supported the scenic natural environment. As the Town grows and residential development increases, these qualities can be diminished when not carefully managed.



“Scenic roads” and their rights-of-way, which may be bordered by stone walls and mature trees, are key features that should be preserved. State statute provides that for designated scenic roads, cutting of trees, widening, or any other activity that may change the character of the road should be subject to review by the Planning Board, or Historic District Committee if within a Historic District, at a public meeting.

“Scenic vistas” or “viewsheds” are areas of scenic beauty as viewed from Town roads and vantage points that are enjoyed by many residents and visitors. Conservation of these views, which are generally on private land, will require sensitivity, resources, planning, and cooperation. The challenge is to adopt a method for protection using both qualitative and quantitative criteria in order to achieve a balance between scenic considerations, private property rights, and practical needs.

#### Canterbury Scenic Roads

1. Baptist Hill Rd (from Baptist Rd – Briar Brush Rd)
2. Clough Pond Rd
3. Hackleboro Rd
4. Old Tilton Rd
5. Wilson Rd
6. Cogswell Rd

#### LIGHT POLLUTION & DARK SKIES

New Hampshire’s dark skies are a part of the rural experience that attracts tourism and residents to Canterbury. There are operations in nearby towns including the New Hampshire Motor Speedway and commercial greenhouses that have bright lights causing light pollution. All excessive lighting or improperly covered lighting fixtures contribute to light pollution and can cause glare for drivers, intrude onto nearby properties, or generally diminish the aesthetic value of the town and its skies. Artificial lights can also be harmful to a wide spectrum of

wildlife including migratory birds, nocturnal amphibians, and insects.

There are designated outdoor lighting installments that can meet Canterbury’s needs for safety and security while helping to preserve the rural night sky aesthetic. An added benefit of dark sky friendly fixtures is that they are also more energy efficient. Some New Hampshire towns have begun to enact Lighting or Dark Sky Protection Ordinances. These regulations require newly installed outdoor lights to only emit the minimum amount of illumination recommended by industry standards for their given purpose (e.g., streetlights, building security, etc.) and are fully shielded ensuring light shines directly down to limit pollution.

#### GRAVEL & OTHER MINERAL EXTRACTION

Sand, gravel, and bedrock mineral extraction can have a profound and permanent impact upon the landscape and the natural resources of the Town. These impacts may include changes to the quantity and quality of water leaving the site, destruction of wildlife habitat, adverse scenic impacts, and impact on abutters. However, mining is a commercial land use that can benefit the local economy and private landowners. Proper erosion control and reclamation techniques used in the extraction of gravel and other minerals can reduce the impact on the environment and the land can later be returned to other productive uses. Mineral extraction may often precede conversion of land from an undeveloped state to a more intensive commercial or residential use.

#### OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation takes many forms and has many positive attributes for the Town and the physical, social, and mental wellbeing of its residents. Outdoor activities promote physical activity, connection between community members, and appreciation for the natural world.

Outdoor recreation in this section of the Plan for Tomorrow may include non-motorized activities such as walking, hiking, bike

riding, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing, as well as motorized activities such as snowmobiling and riding ATVs. These activities all rely on access to the outdoors that may include formal and informal trails, including the routes managed by the Sno-Shakers Snowmobile Club.

Much of the outdoor recreation in Canterbury occurs on privately owned property that landowners leave open for public enjoyment. An increasing population would increase the demand for these spaces. Landowners have the right to post their property, restricting access, which would stress the remaining sites further. Promoting respect and sensibility of the recreating public and securing trail privileges from willing landowners are ways to help ensure the continuing availability of outdoor recreation space.

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*The region's famous explosion of autumn color begins to speckle the landscape in Canterbury and beyond, as seen from the perspective of a bluff overlooking the Muchyedo Banks and the Merrimack River*





## *Objectives and Recommendations*

This chapter has focused on the Town's current natural features and its character, as well as describe the importance of protection in the face of potential threats. There are a variety of strategies to conserve natural resources and preserve the quiet and scenic character found in Canterbury.

### *Objective One*

Conserve natural resources and habitats for plants and wildlife and to promote climate resilience locally and regionally.

- 1 Use improved natural resource data as it comes available to identify areas of high priority for conservation.
- 2 Conserve landscapes and habitats that can mitigate climate change or be most resilient in adapting to climate change.
- 3 Ensure funding for land conservation through continued dedication of 100% of the Land Use Change Tax to acquiring conservation land or easements or supporting such projects in town initiated by qualified organizations.
- 4 In priority habitats and natural areas, prioritize plant and wildlife conservation (by means of conserving those habitats) before allowing development or changes to the natural environment.
- 5 Encourage and support good stewardship of private land to support a variety of conservation goals and reduce potential adverse impacts of land management.
- 6 Evaluate Class VI roads to determine which should be converted to Class A trails or remain unimproved to protect large unfragmented natural areas for conservation and recreation.
- 7 Identify opportunities to conserve streams, riparian corridors, and wildlife corridors that connect open spaces.

### *Objective Two*

Protect and conserve the resources that contribute to human health and quality of life, including clean air, clean water, and biological diversity.

- 1 Conserve large blocks of unfragmented land to support the multiple beneficial roles they play, including wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor recreation, climate resilience, and economic stimulus to the Town. Where possible, cooperate with adjacent towns to conserve large areas that cross Town borders.
- 2 Protect surface waters, groundwater, and watersheds to ensure clean drinking water for residents.
- 3 Encourage the use of best technologies and other methods to promote clean air.

### *Objective Three*

#### Conserve working landscapes for agriculture and forestry.

- 1 Restrict development on prime agricultural lands to ensure the ability to produce food locally for the benefit of local people and the economy.
- 2 Encourage landowners to protect their remaining fields for agricultural use and to conduct operations in a sustainable manner.
- 3 Support responsible agricultural and forestry endeavors for production of food, wood, and other locally sourced/distributed goods for the benefit of the local economy.
- 4 Accommodate evolving trends in agriculture and consider the unique needs of agricultural operations, especially very small-scale operations.
- 5 Encourage residents to follow best management practices in agriculture, forestry, pollution control, trail building, and other activities to minimize adverse impacts on environmental health.
- 6 Evaluate whether any town-owned properties should be designated as Town Forests.

### *Objective Four*

#### Conserve land, waterbodies, and landscapes that can maintain the Town's rural character and beauty, and provide and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation for current and future generations.

- 1 Identify key Town-owned properties and develop a stewardship plan to ensure that they are properly managed to enhance their value for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, agriculture, forest management, scenic enjoyment, and to demonstrate good stewardship of natural resources.
- 2 Establish a Town Trails Committee to coordinate the preservation and improvement of trails to provide public access to a variety of natural areas and to manage all aspects of trail maintenance and use.
- 3 Encourage landowners to arrange for permanent protection of important habitats, natural areas, and scenic resources.
- 4 Evaluate and improve zoning and subdivision regulations to limit cumulative adverse effects caused by scattered development on larger contiguous areas.
- 5 Maintain the intangible qualities of rural character such as scenic quality, quiet, and rural roadways.



# Appendix 1

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## **Recent Trends:**

As illustrated by the graph on the following page, Canterbury's population has seen an extended period of continuous growth for the last several decades; a period which began in the 1960s, with a significant population boom of nearly 60% in the decade to follow. By 2010 the population of Canterbury reached a total of 2,352 - more than triple that of the census data from 1960. Since 2010, however, the magnitude of growth has slowed. The estimated population for 2018 indicated a very minor increase since 2010 of only 1.9%. Decennial population projections for 2020-2030 also indicated a slowed rate of growth. Furthermore, decennial projections for 2040-2050 suggest an even slower rate of increase, eventually tapering off to a decline in total population, for the very first time since the initial boom of the 1970s.

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**Elements:** • Population Trends • School Enrollment & Trends • Economic Characteristics • Housing & Taxes

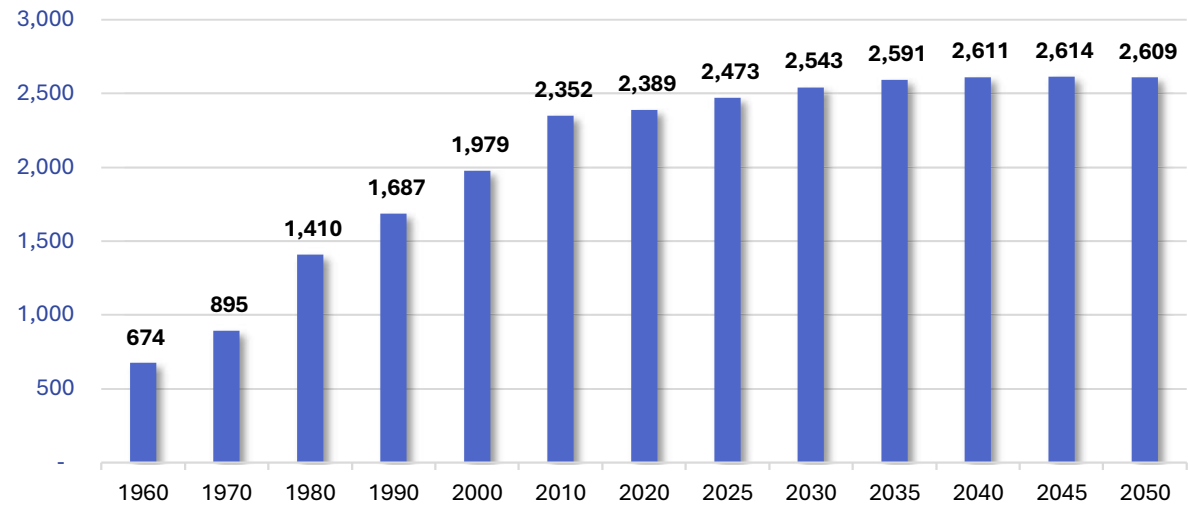
## Population Trends

Canterbury's population growth is like that experienced by the state of New Hampshire, as well as that of Merrimack County. Both experienced significant periods of growth, beginning in 1960. They too started experiencing a decrease in growth during the 2000s. Decennial population projections for the present day through 2030 (2020-2030) show a continuation of this slowing trend, with a population reduction slated for 2040-2050.

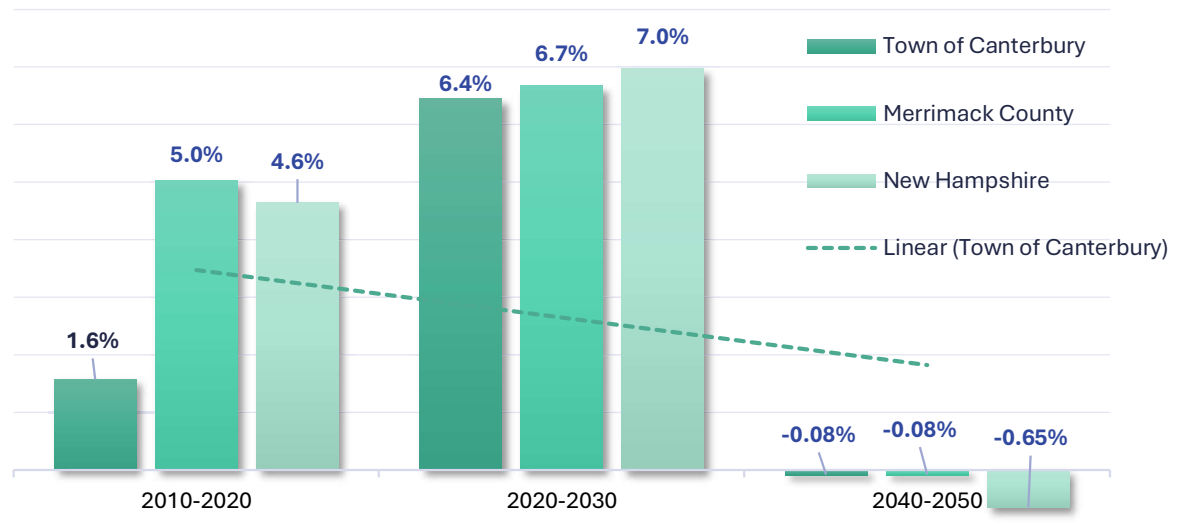
Comparing Canterbury's growth to abutting communities, Canterbury's past growth between 2000 and 2010 is comparable to its neighbors, just falling behind that of Loudon and Gilmanton. Examining projected growth, Canterbury has the highest projected increase of growth between 2018 and 2030, followed by Loudon and Gilmanton.

### Town of Canterbury, Historic & Projected Population 2010-2050

New Hampshire Dpt. of Planning and Development Census Data (2022)



### % Change in Population; New Hampshire, Merrimack County, Town of Canterbury 2010-2050



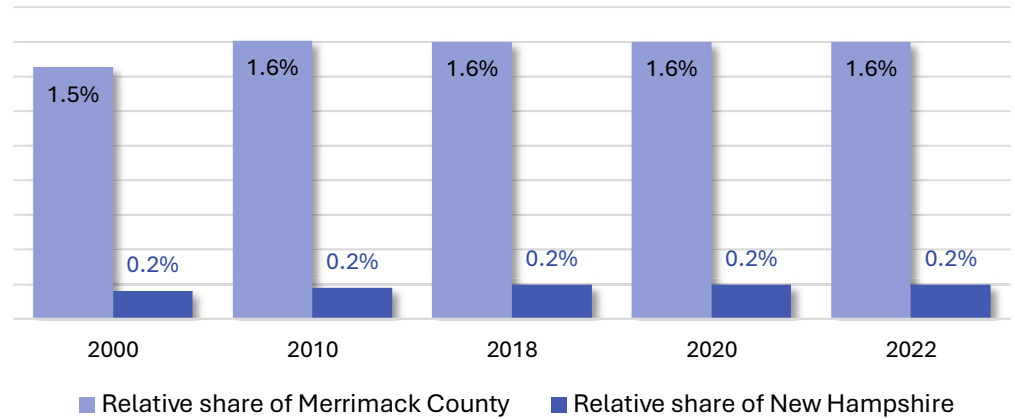
## RELATIVE SHARE OF POPULATION

Canterbury's relative share of Merrimack County's population has grown since 1970 but has remained relatively stable since 2000. The most recent relative share is 1.6% as of 2022. The relative share of New Hampshire has remained steady since 1980 at 0.2%, which was previously 0.1% in 1970.

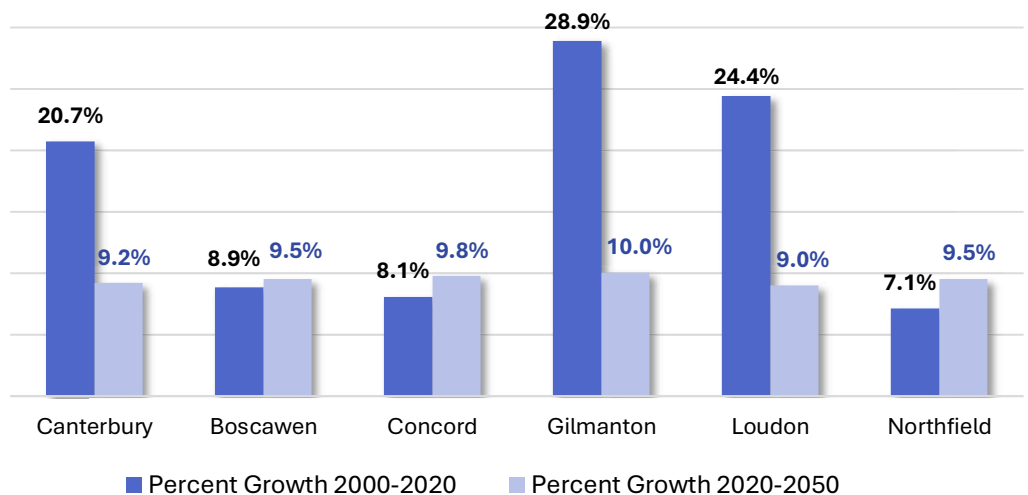
## CONTRIBUTORS TO POPULATION GROWTH

Population growth or loss is most frequently driven by two factors: migration and natural increase. Migration, the net difference of people moving in and out of an area, has historically accounted for the large increases in statewide population during the 1970s and 1980s. Many moved from Massachusetts, adding to the level of education in the workforce, stimulated the economy, and provided employment opportunities. More recent trends demonstrated a negative net migration statewide from the mid-2000s to early 2010s, indicating that more people were moving out of New Hampshire than into New Hampshire. However, data for the 2010s and 2020s indicates a positive trend, but still not back to the gains it experienced in the early 2000s.

### Canterbury's Relative Share of Population



### Percent Growth of Canterbury & Abutting Communities, (2020-2050)



Natural increase, the difference of births and deaths per year, naturally fluctuates over time. Nationwide, the number of deaths has outweighed the number of births due to overall fewer births and an increasing number of deaths. This is seen in the figure below, over the past decade.

### Canterbury's Natural Increase 2010-2023

Canterbury's Annual Reports

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Births</b>	12	14	13	10	13	5	5	16	12	10	20	17	17	9
<b>Deaths</b>	11	14	14	11	16	24	17	19	16	17	14	21	22	16
<b>Natural Increase</b>	1	0	-1	-1	-3	-19	-12	-3	-4	-7	6	-4	-5	-7

### AN AGING POPULATION

Canterbury's population is growing older, on par with statewide trends. In the past decade, the number of residents 45 and over has seen a drastic increase, compared to the modest changes in the younger population. New Hampshire, along with much of the U.S., experienced a large increase in births due to the baby boom post-World War II. The baby boom now contributes to a larger adult population as baby boomers start to reach their sixties and seventies. This large age group is also expected to continue to increase as the over 65 population grows in the next two decades.

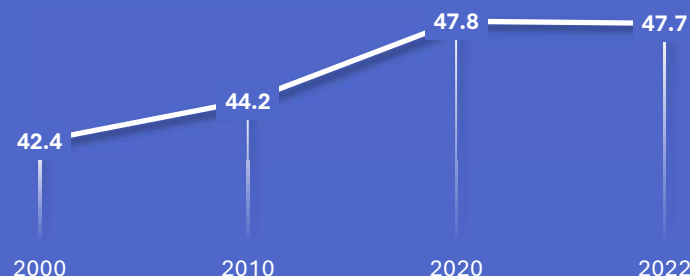
As shown in the figure to the right, US Census data from 2010 shows higher percentages of population over the age of 45 compared to data gathered in 2000. This trend is further backed as the percentage of population under that age of 45 in 2010 was less than that reported in 2000. However, data from 2020 shows a slight decrease in people over the age of 50, as compared to 2010.

Day-to-day living for an aging population is becoming more of a concern, as many retirees choose to remain in rural areas, to stay in close proximity to family, as well as the scenic and recreational amenities available in Central New Hampshire. Recreation, housing, and transportation needs change as the population ages. Providing accessible year-round outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities to older residents as they age in place is important, especially as an increasing number choose to stay in New Hampshire. The demand for smaller houses for downsizing families will continue to increase as the average household size continues to decrease statewide. As the population ages, transportation for everyday needs could be problematic without a public option.

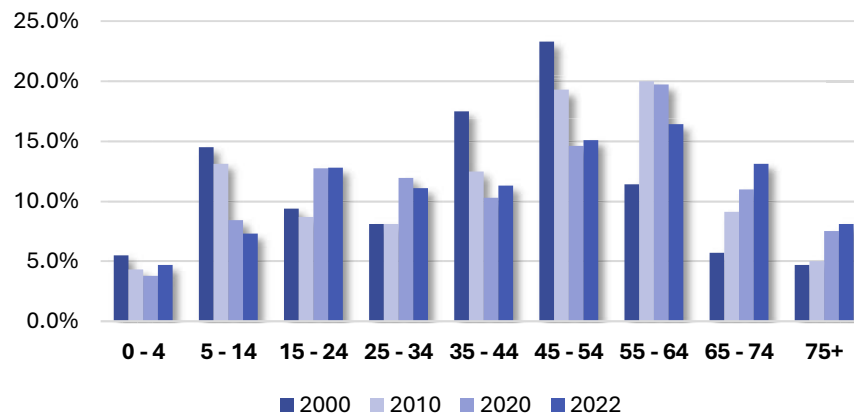
### The Workforce

One of the advantages of having a strong middle-aged population is a strong working population, with many in the peak of their careers and earning potential. This also means a large portion of New Hampshire's workforce will be retiring soon, potentially causing a shortfall of qualified workers available to fill their positions.

### Canterbury Median Age, 2000-2022



### Canterbury's Population by Age, 2000-2022 Decennial Census records

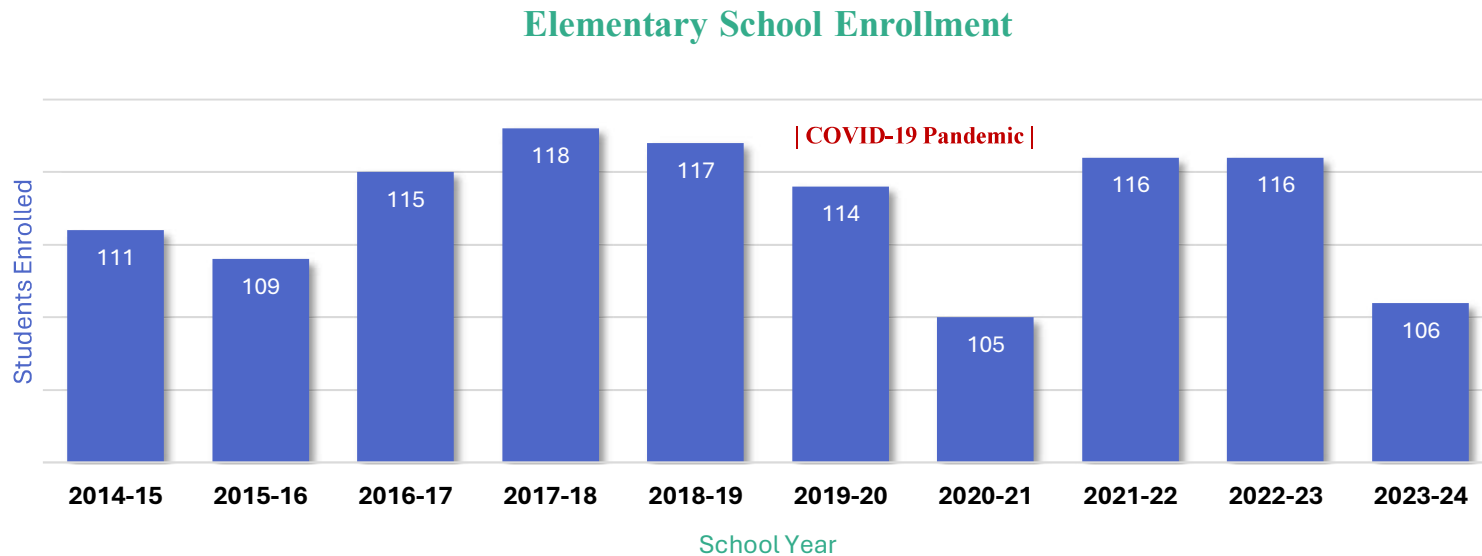




## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT & TRENDS

Chichester students attend the Shaker Regional School District. In addition to a growing senior population, trends have also shown a decrease in elementary school enrollment due to a decrease in school aged children. Looking towards the future, the decrease in school aged children is expected to continue, especially as the overall population rate of growth slows and the percentage of the population above 65 rises. Additionally, many New Hampshire high school graduates attend out-of-state colleges and are choosing not to return to the state to live and work, resulting in a lower number of young families.

As shown in the figure below, recent annual enrollment at Canterbury Elementary School is similar to that experienced in 2010 and 2011, though large fluctuations occurred in the mid-2010s, with higher and lower enrollments. Children attend Belmont Middle School and Belmont High School.



# Resident Economic Characteristics

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

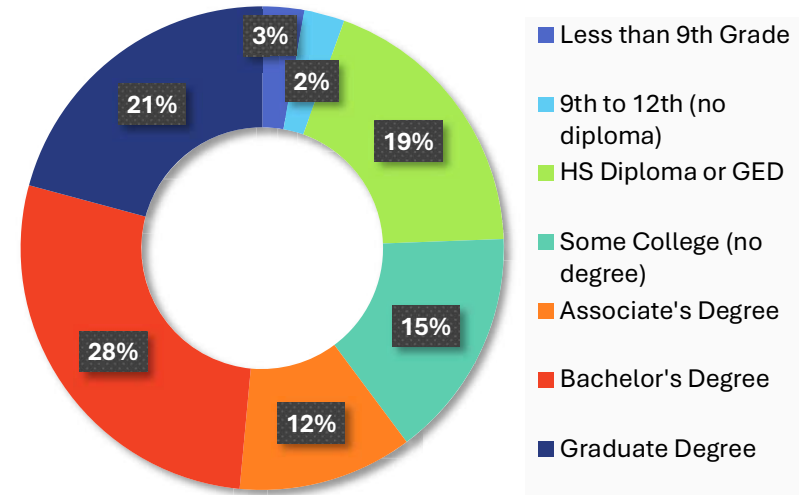
Approximately 94.5% of Canterbury residents have a high school diploma or higher post-secondary education. Nationally, New Hampshire is well known for having a high percentage of educated residents. Though many New Hampshire natives choose to stay in the state, a large portion of the state's educational attainment is gained through migrants moving to New Hampshire.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In addition to contributing to New Hampshire's education attainment, individuals and families moving into the state contribute to maintaining a productive economy, with good jobs and competitive salaries. However, those moving into New Hampshire have decreased significantly over the past decade, decreasing the overall income for residents in New Hampshire. Canterbury's median household income was reported as \$111,094 in 2022. This number is based on a 5-year estimate provided by the American Consumer Survey (US Census Bureau) and is notably higher than the median of both Merrimack County and the state of New Hampshire.

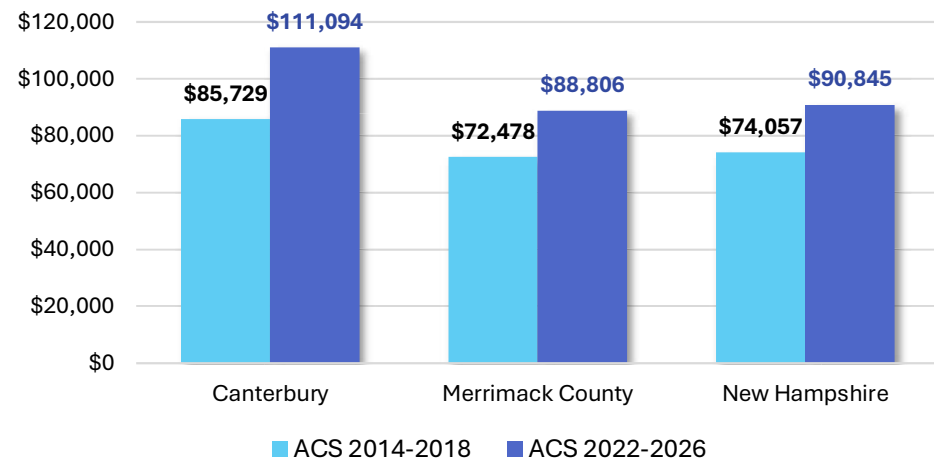
## Canterbury Education Attainment

ACS 2022 5-year Estimate Data



## Median Household Income

ACS 2022 5-year Estimate Data



## POVERTY

Statewide, poverty levels are highest predominantly in the North Country and along the border of Maine. This is most likely caused by lower education and thus income levels in these areas. The percentage of Canterbury's population which falls below poverty level (5.2%) is lower than that of both Merrimack County and New Hampshire. However, it should be noted that this is an increase of 2% from the 2018 census. This is a difference equal to that of the margin between Canterbury and Merrimack County, and Canterbury and New Hampshire.

## Housing

### AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

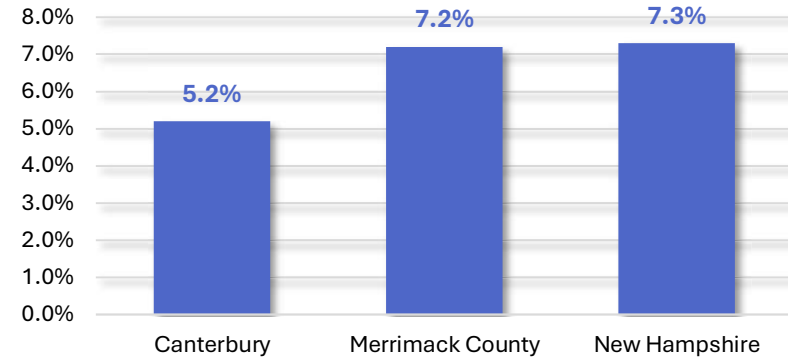
The need for housing statewide and throughout New Hampshire can be attributed to modest population growth and decreasing household size. Statewide, the average household size decreased from 2.53 in 2010, to 2.46 in 2022. The town of Canterbury also saw a decrease in average household size, from 2.64 in 2010, to 2.50 people per household in 2022.

### POPULATION DENSITY

Canterbury's population density per square mile has increased over the past five decades, from 32.1 in 1980 to 54 in 2020. This trend is also prevalent in Canterbury's abutting communities, as shown in the table to the right.

## % of Population Below Poverty Level

ACS 2022 5-year Estimate Data



## AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

DECENNIAL CENSUS RECORDS & ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE

Year	New Hampshire	Canterbury
2010	2.53	2.64
2022	2.46	2.50

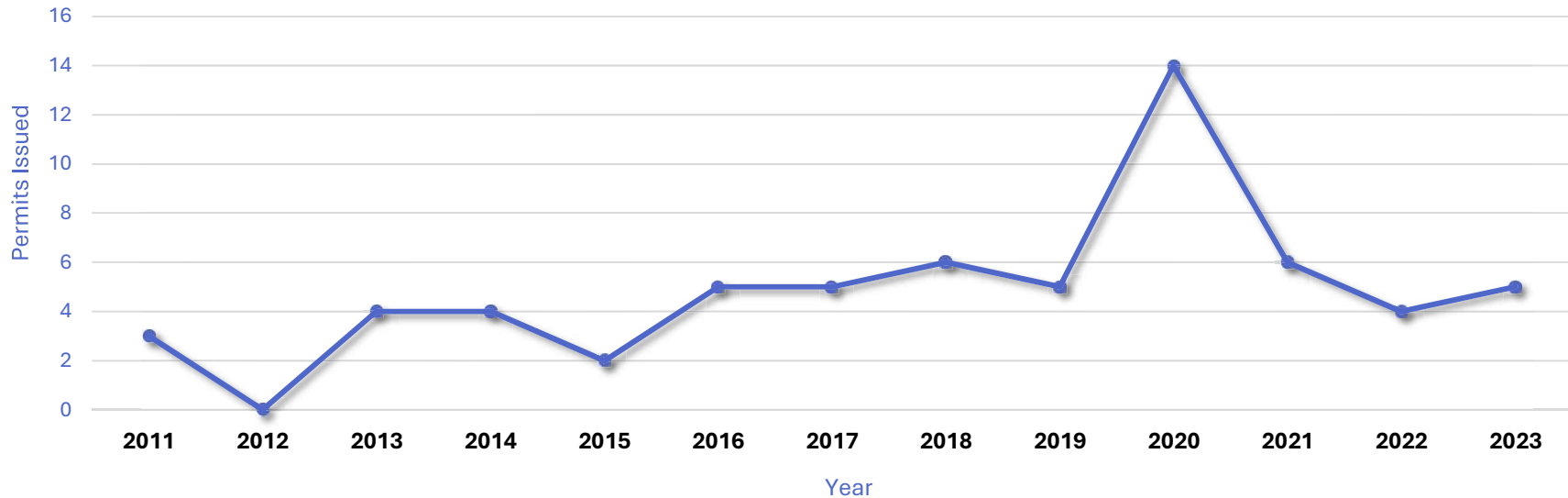
## Persons per Square Mile (mi<sup>2</sup>)

Decennial Census Records, NH Economic & Labor Market Bureau

Community	mi <sup>2</sup>	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Canterbury	43.9	32.1	38.4	45.1	53.6	54.0
Boscawen	24.9	138.0	144.0	47.5	159.2	160.0
Concord	64.0	475.0	562.6	635.7	667.1	687.5
Gilmanton	57.6	33.7	45.3	53.1	65.6	69.3
Loudon	46.0	53.3	89.4	97.4	115.6	120.8
Northfield	28.5	107.1	149.6	159.6	169.4	173.3

## Canterbury's Building Permit Trends

NH Office of Strategic Initiatives

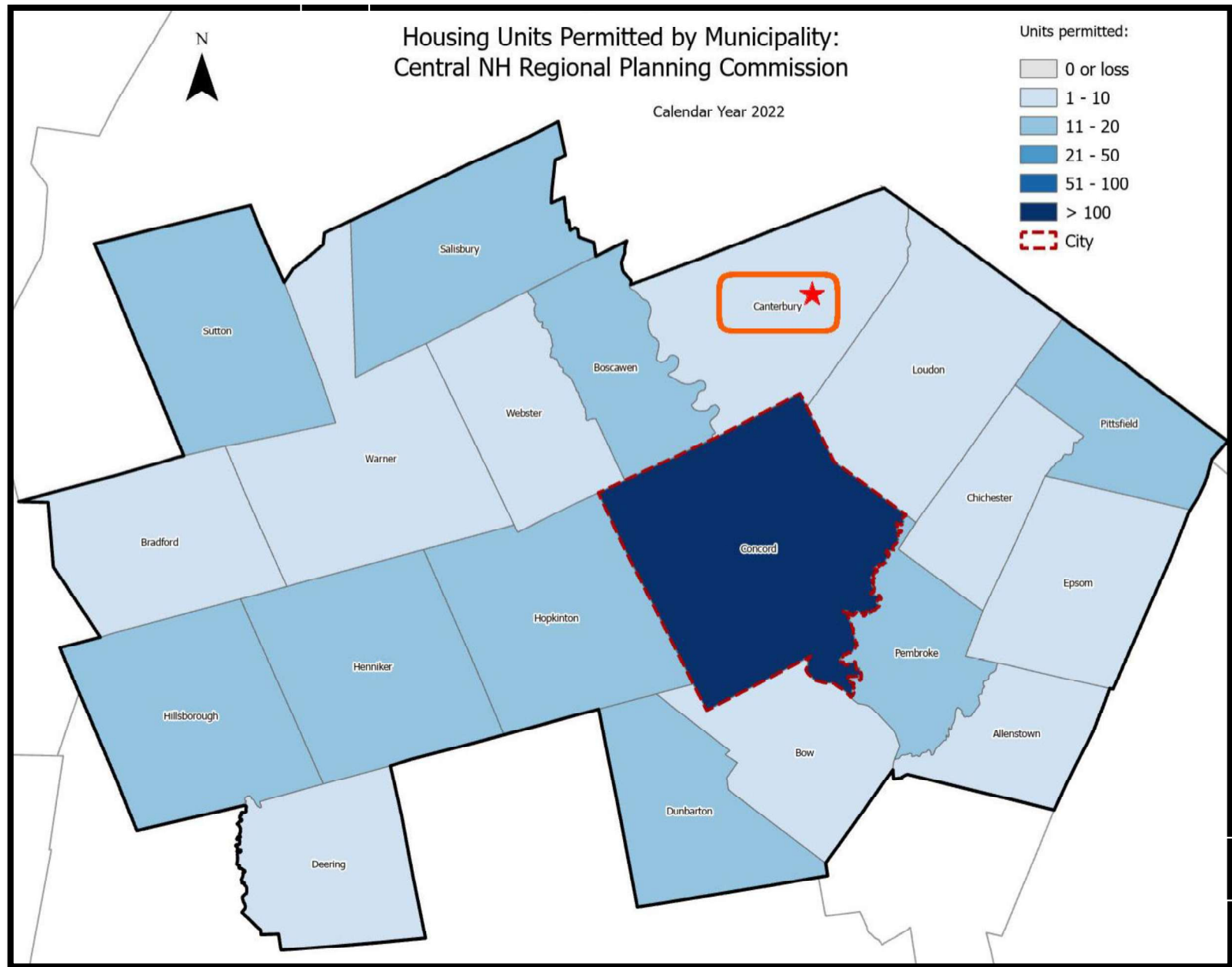


### BUILDING PERMITS

The figure above shows the total number of building permits issued in Canterbury between 2011 and 2023. It is worth noting that this total number represents the net change of dwelling units and considers any demolition permits as a negative value. Over this period, nearly all the permits issued were for single family homes, with the exception of one demolition permit filed in 2011, for a manufactured unit.

### Housing Needs of the Aging Population

As the population ages, the demand for smaller housing units increases with homeowners looking to downsize and fit their physical needs. As the number of older adults is predicted to increase over the next two decades, concern over accessibility for the older demographic increases as access to day-to-day needs becomes a challenge. These challenges include mobility issues for needs such as transportation to grocery stores, doctors' offices and recreational resources. Additionally, growing concern for the high cost of living, including housing and taxes in rural and suburban areas, can be challenging for the older population living on a fixed income.





# Employment

## LABOR FORCE

According to the New Hampshire Economic & Labor Market Bureau, the number of people in the New Hampshire civilian labor force increased between 2014 and 2022 by 4%, with an overall increase of 30,052 residents. However, the number of people in the civilian labor force has *not* increased consistently every year, as a decrease occurred between 2010 and 2011 and then again between 2019 and 2020, as shown below. Canterbury has seen a significant 13.6% decrease in its civilian labor force between 2014 and 2022. This downturn was not a gradual, nor a consistent one as a sudden shift in 2020 abruptly halted and changed what had previously been a positive trend since 2014.

**Historic Civilian Labor Force, Canterbury & Statewide**  
(2014-2022)

Geography	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Canterbury	1,435	1,443	1,457	1,463	1,478	1,492	1,380	1,244	1,240
New Hampshire	743,320	745,701	751,500	754,682	762,758	773,740	758,702	773,673	773,372

## OCCUPATION & EMPLOYERS

United States Census Bureau data indicated that 97.5% of Canterbury's civilian labor force is employed. Though many residents travel outside of Canterbury for work, many small, local businesses are present in Canterbury. While the table below is not a complete list, it shows major employers that secure the services of a number of individuals, including many that are Canterbury residents.

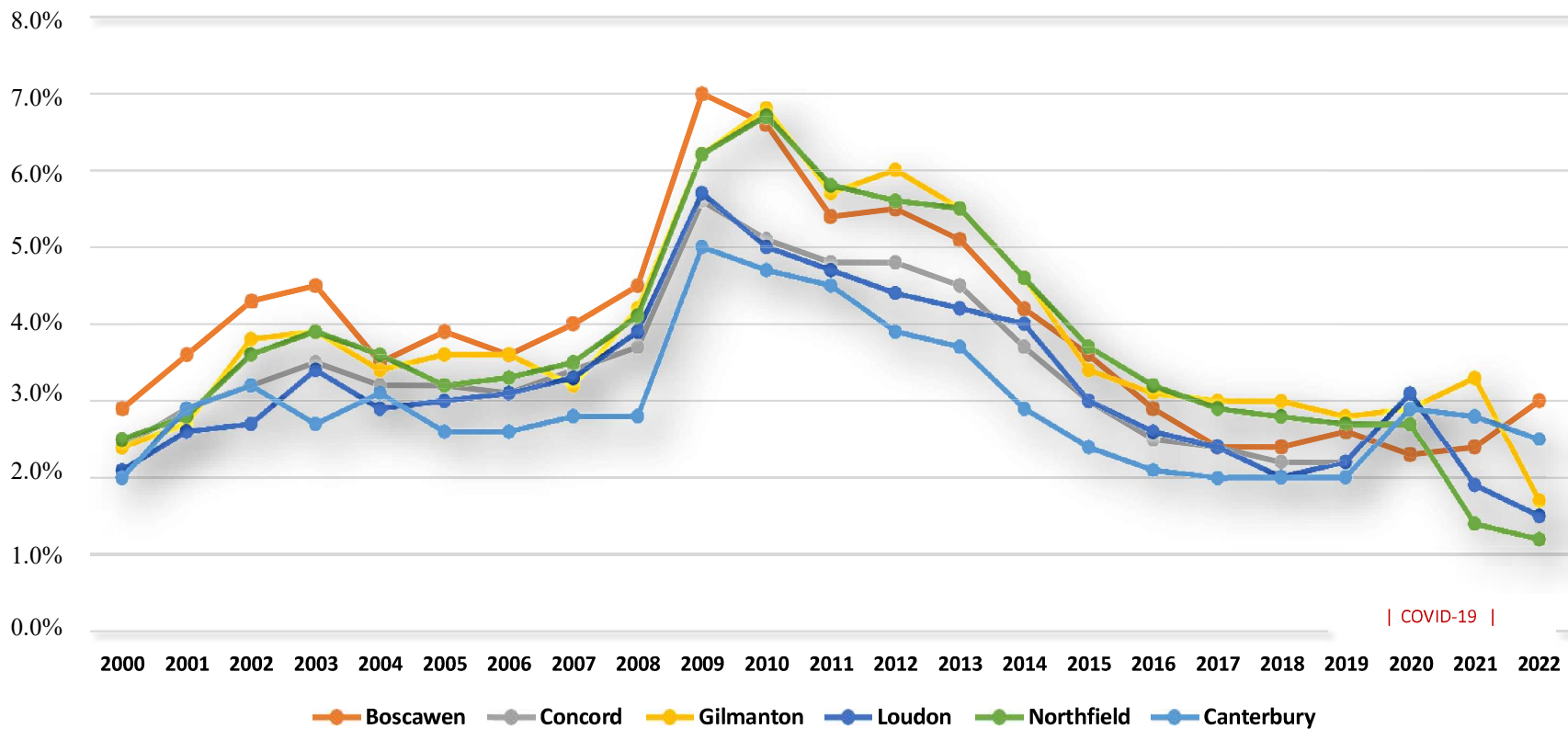
### Major Employers in Canterbury New Hampshire Economic & Labor Market Bureau

Employer	Location	Employer Size
Canterbury Shaker Village Inc.	Shaker Road	50 To 99
Canterbury Elementary School	Baptist Road	20 To 49
Canterbury Ale Works	Baptist Hill Road	10 To 19
Textile Trucking of Nh Inc	Baptist Hill Road	10 To 19
Brookford Farm, LLC	West Road	10 To 19
Granite Case Management, LLC	Baptist Hill Road	10 To 19
Brookwood Pet Resort	Old Boyce Road	10 To 19
New Freedom Academy, LLC	Shaker Road	5 To 9
Canterbury Hall, LLC	Baptist Road	5 To 9

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Compared to its abutting communities, Canterbury fell in the middle ground, with an unemployment rate of 2.5% in 2022. This is reduced from a rate of 2.8% in 2021, and a continued reduction from a spike in 2020, which drove it from a steady 2% to 2.9%. Prior to 2020, Canterbury's rate of unemployment had changed very little since 2016.

**Unemployment Rates of Canterbury & Abutting Communities**  
NH Economic and Labor Market Bureau & ACS Census



## COMMUTING PATTERNS

As shown in the figure to the right, residents of Canterbury work in various locations across the state. That being said, the figure clearly shows that the majority work to the south, which includes the large employment areas of Concord, Manchester, Nashua, and the other communities along the I-93 corridor.

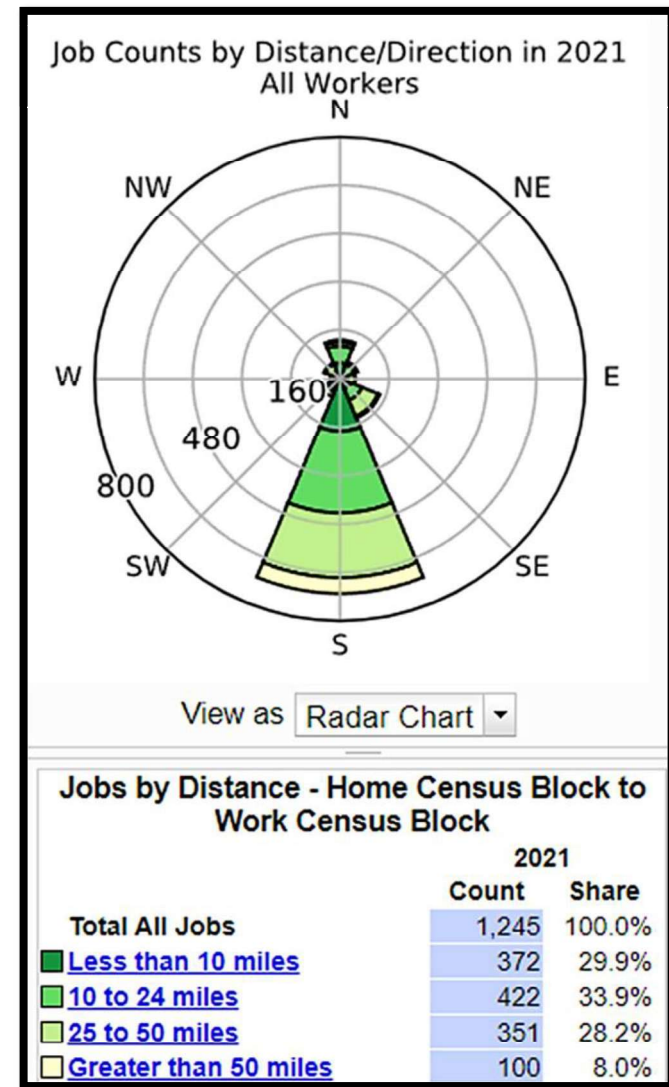
The figure also indicates that residents commute to work a variety of distances, with 29.2% commuting less than 10 miles, 33.9% commuting 10 to 24 miles, 28.2% commuting 25 to 50 miles, and 8.0% commuting greater than 50 miles. Additionally, American Community Survey 2022, 5-Year Estimate data indicates that residents had a mean travel time to work of 30.9 minutes, which is higher than New Hampshire's mean travel time of 27.0 minutes.

Of those that work in Canterbury, data from the U.S. Census Bureau's *OnTheMap* application indicate that 13.6% live in Canterbury. The remaining 86.4% of employees live outside of Canterbury, with many commuting in from nearby communities of Concord, Laconia, Belmont, and Boscawen.

NOTE: The numerals in the radar chart (160, 480, 800) are reference points and not data points. Data is depicted in the "Count" column below the chart.

## Place of Work of Canterbury Residents

U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap Application



## TOWN TAX RATES

### What is Equalization?

Equalized valuation, or equalization, is an adjustment of the town's local assessed values, either upward or downward, in order to approximate the full value of the town's property. Calculated by the NH Department of Revenue Administration, an equalization ratio of 100 means the municipality is assessing property at 100 percent of market value. A ratio less than 100 means the municipality's total market value is greater than its assessed value.

The full value tax rate can then be used to make a limited comparison of what a property in one municipality would pay for taxes to a property of equal value in another municipality. This process is due to an imbalance caused by varying local assessment levels. The full value tax rate is the equalized tax rate for a town.

### Equalized Tax rates, Canterbury & Abutting Communities, 2022

NH Department of Revenue Administration

Community	Total Equalized Valuation including utilities & railroad	Tax Rate per \$1000	2018 EQ Ratio	Full Value Tax Rate
Canterbury	\$502,952,655	\$20.80	73.2	\$15.15
Boscawen	\$451,056,422	\$30.97	68.0	\$20.98
Concord	\$6,783,536,935	\$25.89	78.0	\$19.99
Gilmanton	\$897,794,741	\$23.97	62.5	\$14.92
Loudon	\$1,024,286,267	\$18.55	71.0	\$13.09
Northfield	\$625,687,970	\$14.55	98.5	\$13.82

Reviewing the total tax rates per \$1000 of valuation between 2015 and 2023 shows that the rate decreased from \$26.56 in 2015 to \$21.00 in 2023. This period represents an overall decrease of nearly 21%. While there has been an overall decreasing trend during this period, it has not been static – with many ups and downs occurring on a yearly basis.



Compared to its surrounding communities, Canterbury has one of the lowest net valuations, with a total equalized valuation of 502,952,655.00, as per the ACS, 2022 5-year estimate. Canterbury's full value tax rate falls roughly in the middle of its abutting communities, at \$15. 15. Canterbury's most comparable full-value tax rate is Gilmanton, at \$14.92.

### Canterbury's Tax Rates, 2015-2023

NH Department of Revenue Administration

Year	Municipal Rate per \$1000	County Rate per \$1000	Local Education Rate per \$1000	State Education Rate per \$1000	Total Rate per \$1000
2015	\$6.50	\$2.81	\$14.97	\$2.28	\$26.56
2016	\$5.73	\$2.84	\$14.20	\$2.18	\$24.95
2017	\$6.05	\$2.84	\$14.83	\$2.26	\$25.98
2018	\$6.29	\$2.95	\$15.16	\$2.17	\$26.57
2019	\$6.32	\$3.05	\$16.26	\$2.24	\$27.87
2020	\$8.07	\$3.01	\$14.30	\$2.21	\$27.59
2021	\$5.07	\$2.07	\$11.74	\$1.63	\$20.51
2022	\$5.78	\$2.04	\$11.88	\$1.10	\$20.80
2023	\$6.35	\$2.26	\$10.91	\$1.48	\$21.00